

FEBRUARY 5
COLUMN
eltsin celebr
3rd birthday
MOSCOW (AP) — President Boris Yeltsin celebrated his 53rd birthday on Friday. He is due to leave for a state visit to Jordan on Saturday. Yeltsin is expected to offer a replacement for the ousted Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, who was ousted in a referendum on Saturday. The Russian president's replacement will be chosen by the Russian people in a referendum on Saturday. The Russian president's replacement will be chosen by the Russian people in a referendum on Saturday.

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ndergoing
psychiatric
DNEY (R) — The 33-year-old son of a British man, Charles, was undergoing psychiatric treatment in a hospital in London. The man's name is not being disclosed. The man's name is not being disclosed. The man's name is not being disclosed.

erman prince
breaks arm
EGENSBURG, (AP) — Prince of Liechtenstein, Prince Alois, broke his arm while skiing in the Swiss Alps. The prince is recovering in a hospital. The prince is recovering in a hospital. The prince is recovering in a hospital.

children found
England
DROUAY, England (AP) — Three children were found in a car in the English town of Drouay. The children were found in a car in the English town of Drouay. The children were found in a car in the English town of Drouay.

computer hack
alled queen
LONDON (AP) — A computer hacker claimed to have hacked into the computer system of Queen Elizabeth II. The hacker claimed to have hacked into the computer system of Queen Elizabeth II. The hacker claimed to have hacked into the computer system of Queen Elizabeth II.

10 killed in attack on Sudan mosque
NICOSIA (R) — Ten people were killed in an armed attack on a mosque in Omdurman, twin city of the Sudanese capital Khartoum, during Friday prayers, the Sudanese Interior Ministry reported in a statement broadcast by state radio. About five attackers "carried out a wicked act of aggression," at the mosque, the statement, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, said. The attackers fled but one suspect was captured, the ministry said. Ten people were killed and several injured, some of them seriously, it said. The statement gave no indication of the attackers' motives but said early reports indicated there were foreigners among them.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي

REDAKTS
DIVISION
UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN

Jordan backs social development summit
NEW YORK (Petra) — Jordan's permanent representative to the United Nations Adnan Abu Odeh said Friday Jordan had always supported the idea of holding an international summit to discuss social development out of its awareness of the increasing social problems and the dangers inherent in them at national, regional and international levels. Addressing a meeting of a summit preparatory committee at the U.N. headquarters in New York, Mr. Abu Odeh said Jordan believes that social problems are universal and seeks an international effort to tackle them. Jordan, he said, realises that the three main issues that would be handled by the conference will be of concern to all countries in the world. Choosing Copenhagen to host the conference is but a sign on the state of unity the world is living to counter environmental problems and demographic changes, he said, adding that if the summit was to achieve effective results, the participating countries have to sincerely recognise this state of unity. Mr. Abu Odeh said the Jordanian government had taken extensive procedures to prepare for this international summit and had set up a specialised national panel headed by the minister of social development.



His Majesty King Hussein is received upon his return home on Friday by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan (photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

King returns, says ties with U.S. are being consolidated

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein returned home Friday describing as "very successful" talks he held with U.S. President Bill Clinton and other administration officials and saying that the two countries are determined to bring their relation to the strong levels of the past.

"I believe (the visit) was a very successful one. It came at a good time... (and) was characterised by openness and frankness," King Hussein told reporters upon returning to Amman from a three-leg visit that also took him to Austria and Croatia.

King Hussein said that there was a genuine desire in the U.S. to support Jordan and see American-Jordanian relations "develop and grow."

"But this might need time and patience," he said.

Reaffirming Jordan's commitment to a just and comprehensive Middle East peace, King Hussein expressed hope for progress on all tracks of the Arab-Israeli peace talks in the upcoming period.

But in response to a question on how soon Middle East peace could be achieved, the King said: "I cannot say for sure that we are that close from achieving peace. But I believe

the process is serious."

King Hussein said that Jordan had rejected "suggestions" to ratify a peace treaty with Israel and then negotiate its terms because "this is not the right approach at all."

He said Jordan was currently negotiating the items on the agenda for peace talks with Israel and that is "a part of a process leading to the establishment of final, comprehensive peace."

"Sometimes there are difficulties or obstacles, but I believe that we can overcome (them) if everybody's wish was to work together for peace," said King Hussein, who added that he was not fully familiar with the outcome of the Davos talks between Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Responding to a question on claims by Israeli Knesset member Yael Dayan that she would visit Jordan in March upon his invitation, King Hussein said, "I have not issued an invitation."

"But I don't know, maybe she'd like to visit Jordan in March and maybe that should be possible. I don't have anything to say about that."

Responding to a question on the assassination of Jordanian diplomat Nayeb Imran Maaytah in Beirut last week,

King Hussein said he "was more than angered and saddened by this kind of vicious crime."

But the King said that Jordan, which has paid dearly "in blood in the past for our principles and ideals" would not be "intimidated by cowards and cowardly acts."

"All of us are going to die sooner or later... but nobody can murder a nation and I think that here we have a nation which stands proud and we will never be intimidated by cowards and cowardly acts," King Hussein said.

"I don't think that there are any in this world who can intimidate this country," he said.

King Hussein expressed confidence that the perpetrators of two explosions in cinema theatres in Amman and Zarqa in the last two weeks "will be found out and be dealt with."

Nine people were injured in the explosions. Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali said the authorities had made some progress in the investigations. But he did not elaborate.

Responding to a question on the situation in Yemen, King Hussein said Jordan will "do the impossible" for bringing about reconciliation between Aden and Sana'a but added that the signing of a treaty to end

the crisis could be delayed for some time. (see separate story).

King Hussein, who on Thursday visited Jordanian peacekeeping troops in Croatia, praised the role Jordan is playing in keeping peace in that country. He said this role corresponds with Jordan's ambitions and goals to see people live in "peace and dignity."

On a cold and windy day, several hundred Jordanian soldiers lined up in front of their headquarters near Nauska 100 kilometres west of the Croatian capital Zagreb, to welcome the King, the AP reported.

They are stationed in Sector West, one of four U.N. protected areas in Croatia, where U.N. forces have kept relative peace since Croats and Serbs reached a ceasefire accord in January 1992.

The 950-strong Jordanian battalion that rotates every six months has been deployed there since April 1992. It was King Hussein's second visit to them.

There were cheers when the King walked into the improvised white tent, the size of a basketball field, into which the entire battalion managed to squeeze.

They chanted: "We will give our soul and blood for you,"

(Continued on page 5)



His Majesty King Hussein embraces Her Royal Highness Princess Haya upon his return home Friday along with Her Majesty Queen Noor (photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

Supply Ministry refutes charges

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Supply Friday denied reports in some local newspapers that milk powder imported by the ministry was unfit for consumption and threatened legal action against parties spreading such information.

The director of the ministry's quality control department, Hassan Mbeilan, said the milk imported by the ministry from Belgium underwent tests in the manufacturing country and at the ministry's laboratories in Amman when it was received in the beginning of 1993.

Of the whole quantity, totalling about 300,000 cartons, some 255,000 were sold in the local market while part of the rest was found in swollen bags, Mr. Mbeilan said.

These, he added, were sent to the laboratories of the Ministry of Health, the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), the University of Jordan and the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) and none of them did not find any reason for not selling them to consumers.

"My capacity as head of the quality control department and an official of the ministry for nine years gives me the right to give my opinion in this issue," Mr. Mbeilan, a master degree holder in food technology, said in a letter sent to the newspapers.

"All lab tests results available at the department from the Ministry of Health, the RSS, the University of Jordan and the municipality in addition to other Arab and international labs prove that the whole quantity of milk is fit for human consumption, including the 45,000 cartons which some alleged that were kept in swollen bags without relying on any lab tests," he said.

He said all the test results, whether biological, chemical or radiological, proved that the milk powder was fit for consumption, conforming with the ministry's standards and specifications.

The fear was caused when some milk bags were found torn or pinched which forced

Arafat may not meet Peres Monday; Rabin consults generals on peace

TUNIS (Agencies) — A senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official said on Friday PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was unlikely to meet Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in Cairo on Monday as a final settlement of security arrangements for Palestinian self-rule was still unsure.

Other PLO officials would probably go in Mr. Arafat's place, Executive Committee member Yasser Abed-Rabbo said.

Mr. Peres said in the United States on Thursday he would meet Mr. Arafat in Cairo on Monday, carrying on from last weekend's talks in Davos, Switzerland.

But Mr. Abed-Rabbo told Reuters: "It is not sure or necessary that Chairman Arafat take part at Monday's meeting, particularly if it does not appear this meeting will be able to reach final results."

Mr. Abed-Rabbo was speaking after a Thursday night review by the PLO leadership of the results of the Davos meeting.

"The PLO leadership has some observations on some issues discussed during the Davos meeting, particularly about the surface of (Jewish) settlements in the Gaza Strip and lateral roads in the Jericho area, for which Israel has not yet provided a clear map," he said.

"There are also some other points on the passages regarding the guarantee of Palesti-

nian citizens' right to enter and quit Palestinian lands without Israeli security obstacles."

Another PLO source said that before deciding whether to attend the Cairo talks, Mr. Arafat was looking for a clear sign from Israel that Mr. Peres would be authorised by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to negotiate a final agreement with the Palestinians on security issues.

"Mr. Arafat does not want to attend another meeting with the number two (Peres) unless he has delegation from number one (Rabin) to take decisions," he said.

The Israelis will take to Cairo the results of Mr. Rabin's Friday conference with army commanders about security arrangements after Israel makes its promised but delayed withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and a West Bank enclave around Jericho.

A pronounced split between the army chiefs and Mr. Peres over negotiating positions with the PLO prompted Mr. Rabin to consult with his generals Friday.

The dispute between Mr. Peres and the army was on security issues, with the army taking a harder line on getting the Palestinians down to details.

Mr. Rabin seemed more optimistic than he did after the Davos talks when he said an agreement could take weeks.

"The goal is to consolidate what was advanced significant-

ly in the Davos talks when Peres meets Arafat Monday in Cairo," Mr. Rabin told Israel Radio when asked why he was meeting with the army's general staff. "But the heart of the security issue has been dealt with in Davos and I hope will be concluded in Cairo."

However, he also told a group of bankers that even if the security issues are solved, "there are still the economic problems, the micro and macro problems, how will it all work?"

Mr. Rabin added that the agreement would not be implemented until all issues were resolved.

Talks stalled over control of the borders into the Palestinian autonomy zone in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho region, including the size of Jericho itself.

"It is an issue of drafting ... the crossings and the size of Jericho, to arrive at an agreed upon, clear result," Mr. Rabin said. "We haven't yet discussed in depth the dimensions of the Palestinian police."

The radio said Mr. Rabin rejected the ideas of joint patrols with Palestinian police, Palestinian outposts on the roads leading to the Gush Katif bloc of settlements and did not want any Palestinian customs agents.

Chief-of-Staff Lieutenant-General Ehud Barak told

Yemeni pact stalled; King pledges continued efforts

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The signing of a reconciliation and reform agreement among Yemen's feuding political leaders have been put off after last-minute differences emerged between the dominant parties in the north and south of the country.

Amman was supposed to have hosted on Monday the signing of the agreement, worked out by a mediation committee last month, and was awaiting a Yemeni delegation headed by Deputy Prime Minister Mujahed Abu Shawareb on Thursday to finalise plans for the event.

But officials said Amman was informed that the delegation was putting off its visit until the Yemeni parties sort out their differences and finalise the draft accord itself.

His Majesty King Hussein, who played a key role in mediating the rift between Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh, said Friday: "I believe that we may still need some time to reach this conclusion. You know the extent of our concern over the Yemeni brothers and our response to their faith in us here in Jordan and their wish that we assist them in reaching the agreement and setting the basis for the future."

The King, who was answering reporters' questions upon his return home from visits to

the U.S. and Austria, (see separate story), added: "We have made great efforts and we will continue. This process might be delayed for some time... we will always try to make Jordan the capital of agreement and reconciliations."

Omani Foreign Minister Yousef Ben Alawi was in Amman Thursday to exchange views with Jordanian officials on the Yemeni developments.

Like King Hussein, Oman's Sultan Qaboos Ben Saeed was also closely involved in mediating the Yemeni political crisis.

Vice-President Beedh has remained ensconced in his Aden stronghold since August when he stalked out of the capital Sanaa, dissatisfied with the slow pace of unification and the violence in the country, which was formed in a merger of the North and south in May 1990.

Abdul Karim Al Iriyani, minister of planning and development and the representative of President Saleh's General People's Congress on the (GPC) mediating committee, charged that the southerners had raised new conditions that would delay the signature.

"We are ready to sign the pact even if it were done aboard a warship in the high seas," Mr. Iriyani told a press conference. "New conditions from the Yemeni Socialist Party

Several people questioned in explosions at cinemas

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Security authorities are questioning at least five people in connection with bombings at two movie theatres in the last two weeks. But officials are declining comment on whether there was any evidence to indicate that a single group was behind the two blasts.

Interior Minister Salameh Hamdan confirmed the arrest of five people on Wednesday, one day after a bomb tore through the Salwa movie theatre in Zarqa, injuring two people, one of them seriously.

The minister said investigations were continuing and that investigators were keeping all possibilities open. Other sources said more arrests were made but did not disclose any details.

The Salwa blast followed a similar explosion on Jan. 26 at the Rivoli movie house in downtown Amman which injured seven people, one of them seriously.

The common features of the two bombings were that both occurred at establishments screening X-rated movies and the nature of the explosive devices were the same. In addition, the exact place where the bombs, described as crude homemade devices lacking any sophistication, was also the same — near the projection rooms.

More importantly, however, according to sources, the bombs were of the same type and defused before they exploded at two liquor stores over the past six months. In turn, those devices appeared to have been built with the same technique that was used by the extremist underground group called Jeish Mohammad (Moham-

mad's Army), the sources said. "It is premature to point the finger at any specific group despite the common features of the explosive devices," said one source. "Anyone who ever worked with the Afghan Mujahadeen could have learnt the technique."

Jeish Mohammad is believed to comprise mostly of Jordanian volunteers who fought with the Afghan rebels and returned home after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1990.

Eighteen members of the group were found guilty of carrying out or plotting attacks against government officials, security officers, state buildings and foreign diplomats as well as liquor stores and night clubs in 1992.

Eight of them, including two in absentia, were sentenced to death. The death sentences, except those on the two at large, were commuted to life terms by His Majesty King Hussein.

Jeish Mohammad was at one point alleged to be the "military wing" of the Muslim Brotherhood, but the Brotherhood has categorically denied any such link with the group.

According to experts on the Islamic movement in Jordan, Jeish Mohammad was set up by hardliners who belonged to the Brotherhood who were disillusioned with what they saw as the leadership's moderate approach and confining the group to the mainstream political process in Jordan.

The Islamic Action Front, the political arm of the Brotherhood, has denounced the Jan. 26 bombing saying violence was not the means to prevent cinemas from showing films that many see as incompatible with the conservative Jordanian society.

Bilaterals to resume on Feb. 15; Syria assails Israel

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said Thursday that Middle East peace talks in Washington have been productive and the parties have agreed to recess until Feb. 15 to confer "with their authorities at home."

The co-sponsors of the talks consultation after with the parties have suggested a short break... and the parties have agreed that the talks will resume here in Washington on Feb. 15th in much the same format that they've been using so far: the more informal, streamlined format... (which) has been conducive to productive, interesting exchanges between the parties," he said.

The spokesman added that "it would be premature to suggest any dramatic breakthroughs in the talks they've had so far."

Asked why the co-sponsors suggested a break, Mr. McCurry said: "I think they felt it was a good opportunity for the parties to take a breather and consult with their governments and their authorities in their respective locations and that it was a good point to maybe take a break. And they've been going for almost two weeks solid and it's a good point to take a break, and then come back again."

Asked at what level will the talks resume, he said: "Same format and my understanding

is, same level, including the heads of delegation and those who have been participating."

Syria criticises Israel

A leading government-run Syrian newspaper Friday blamed Israel for the lack of progress in the 12th round of Middle East peace talks in Washington and indirectly called for U.S. pressure on the Jewish state.

The Al Thawra daily, casting a pall over recently resumed negotiations, said in an editorial: "If no political pressure is exerted on Israel to bring her rulers back to the right path, peace will remain a far-fetched

goal and more setbacks will appear."

"If the peace process remains exposed to continuous setbacks, the Middle East region will be facing the danger of explosion," the newspaper warned.

The Syrians appear to be playing down the prospects for their talks with Israel, which resumed last week after a four-month break, that was triggered by the signing of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation's (PLO) secretly negotiated Sept. 13 accord with Israel.

The talks got underway again after Syrian President Hafez Al Assad met U.S. President Bill Clinton in Gene-

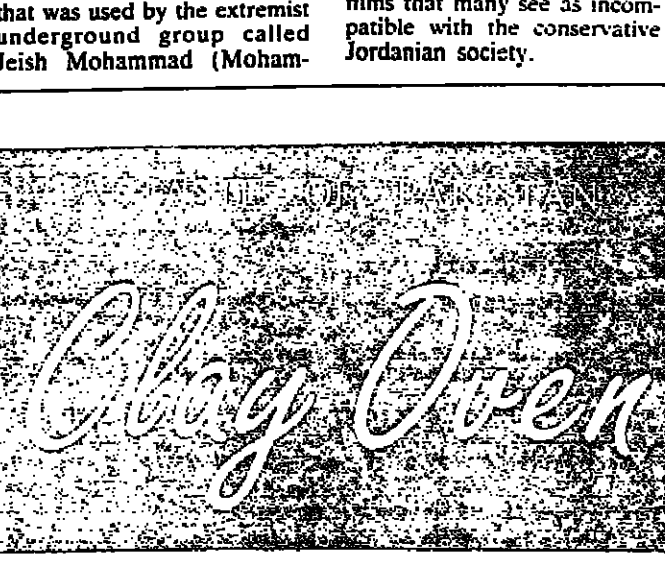
va Jan. 16 and showed signs of a new flexibility.

The latest round ended Thursday.

An Israeli official said there had been "some subtle changes, very subtle," in Syria's position and that the mood had improved.

But Al Thawra declared: "The Washington bilaterals have ended without achieving any tangible progress."

It said that the world has become convinced that Israel's negotiators were still presenting "frozen ideas" about their understanding of peace conditions and requirements.



Play Over

Bishop's murder, riots mar Iranian anniversary

By Alex Efty
The Associated Press

TEHRAN — Iran is celebrating the 15th anniversary of its Islamic revolution this week, but festivities have been marred by an attempt to assassinate the president and the murder of a bishop who was agitating against persecution of his church.

The daily Jomhuri Islami complained Thursday that the Western news media were exploiting the events to "create an atmosphere against the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The week-long celebrations came amid dire economic conditions, worsened by world oil prices at a five-year low and a foreign debt estimated at a staggering \$30 billion, which have heightened hardships for most of Iran's 60 million people.

The abortive attempt on President Hashemi Rafsanjani on Tuesday was followed by the discovery of the lacerated body of Bishop Haik Hovsepian, and clashes between demonstrators and the army in the southeastern city of Zahedan.

Mr. Rafsanjani, who remains popular among the people, was elected to a second four-year term in August on promises of reform to ease the economic problems that force many Iranians to work at two or even three jobs to make ends meet.

Tuesday's shooting incident was initially dismissed by authorities as just an attempt by a lone gunman to disrupt the opening ceremony of the festivities.

But Iran's official radio quoted an unidentified official as saying Thursday that the shooting was part of an organized plot to assassinate the president.

As Mr. Rafsanjani addressed a crowd of thousands at the shrine of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the revolution, the gunman pulled out a pistol but was grabbed by people around him, causing him to miss his target, according to local news reports.

The assailant managed only to fire a few shots in the air, which pierced the roof of the golden-domed shrine.

Mr. Rafsanjani continued his speech unperturbed as the 10,000-strong congregation chanted his name and "Marg bar monafek," or death to the hypocrites, the name Iranians use to refer to the Iraq-based opposition group.

Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, Tehran's image abroad received a heavy blow when the body of the 48-year-old bishop, an Armenian-Iranian who headed the missionary Assemblies of God church in Iran, was found with multiple stab wounds.

Mr. Hovsepian had been agitating for the release of the Rev. Mehdi Dehaj, a member of his church, who had been imprisoned and sentenced to death for changing his religion to Christianity from Islam.

Mr. Hovsepian's body was found by police in a Tehran street several days after he disappeared on his way to the airport.

His brother, Edward, said Mr. Hovsepian had recently received warnings from the authorities to cease the proselytizing activities of his church, which are banned under Iran's Islamic laws.

Middle East Watch, a New York-based human rights group, said it suspected Mr. Hovsepian had been kidnapped by an Iranian security agency, but gave no evidence to back the suspicion.

The London-based Amnesty

International and other human rights groups repeatedly have accused Iran's fundamentalist Shi'ite Muslim leadership of violating human rights of religious minorities in Iran, particularly those of the Baha'i sect. Iran has rejected the charges.

The anniversary celebrations were further marred by riots in Zahedan, Iran's easternmost city, instigated by reports that authorities had demolished a mosque of the Sunni Muslim minority.

Demonstrators went on a rampage of destruction, breaking shop windows and burning the Iranian flag, local news reports said.

They said the protests led to clashes with the army and an unspecified number of arrests. Reports about the demolition of the mosque were denied by local papers.

An official statement said drug smugglers facing a government crackdown in the area had instigated the violence.

Zahedan is close to the borders with predominantly Sunni Pakistan and Afghanistan, an area used by smugglers and drug traffickers.

The Mujahedeen-e-Khalq claimed that at least two people were killed, 14 wounded and about 100 arrested in Tuesday's violence.

The state-run Islamic Republic News Agency blamed "foreigners" and "counter-revolutionaries" who tried to disrupt the anniversary celebrations.

Tehran Television linked the shooting with the riots, and put the blame for both on the United States or Israel.

"Such incidents could only be the work of intelligence agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency or Mossad," Israel's secret service, the television said in a commentary Wednesday.

U.S. urges UNHCR to back Israeli-PLO accord

GENEVA (USIA) — As hope grows that a new era of peace is dawning in the Middle East, the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHCR) and other U.N. bodies must "turn away from bitter and empty rhetoric," says Geraldine Ferraro, the head of the U.S. delegation to the commission.

The declaration of principles, signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Washington on Sept. 13 gives "life to the hope that genuine, lasting and comprehensive peace between Israel and the Arab states may, at last, be obtained," Ms. Ferraro told the 50th session of the commission in a Feb. 3 address here.

Ms. Ferraro, the former congresswoman from New York and Walter Mondale's vice-presidential candidate in 1984, urged delegates to eschew "hostile words" and to "acknowledge the new reality — that genuine progress is being made, step by step, day by day, between Arabs and Israelis."

She called on Arab League nations to "take a first step" toward an era of economic cooperation in the Middle East by setting aside their boycott of Israel.

Progress was already evident at the most recent U.N. General Assembly where discussions were no longer marred by the "pointless vituperation, which in itself, has long

constituted an obstacle to progress, negotiation and peace," she said.

Ms. Ferraro expressed the hope that a UNHCR resolution would emphasize the "very positive role" the United Nations can play in assisting the implementation of the declaration of principles.

The resolution should also state that a settlement of the Middle East conflict is "vital for full implementation of human rights in that area," she said.

"The progress we see on the political front will contribute directly to concrete improvements in human rights on the ground in the occupied territories," she said.

Ms. Ferraro noted U.S. satisfaction that for the first time a UNHCR special rapporteur has been allowed to conduct an investigation in Israel and the occupied territories, and to present his report on human rights abuses in the region to the commission.

"The fact remains that human rights violations continue to occur on both sides," she said. "We in no way condone them."

Ms. Ferraro praised Yasser Arafat's Feb. 1 address to the commission, noting that the chairman of the PLO spoke "not just of the difficulties still facing him, but of the progress that is being made and his hope for success."

U.S.-German differences persist on Iran

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States continues to caution Germany about contacts with Iran, one of very few areas where the two allies "have some significant differences," says the American ambassador to Bonn.

"We are very concerned about contacts with supporters of terrorism," Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke told reporters.

The U.S. and German governments have been working quietly on the issue since October, when both Britain and the United States publicly criticized meetings between the Iranian and German intelligence chiefs, he said.

Without any public accusations, "we are working at the problem, exchanging views and information and eliminating misunderstandings and disagreements," he said.

The United States does not object to the European Union, to which Germany belongs, having "a critical dialogue" with Iran, Mr. Holbrooke said. He used Bonn's description of contact with the Iranian secret police, which Germany says helped gain freedom for nationals.

"Essentially we believe that the recent American experience suggests there is very little value and considerable risk in talking to people who support terrorism, and what is done must be done very carefully if at all," he said.



TALKS IN AUSTRIA: Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky (right) introduces His Majesty King Hussein to the media prior to their meeting in Vienna Thursday (AFP photo)

Peres encourages U.S. Jews to migrate to Israel

BOSTON (AP) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on Thursday encouraged American Jews who plan to immigrate to Israel and predicted his country's economy would boom as Arab-Israeli peace agreements open borders and increase trade.

"The economic situation — looks promising for the future. All we are waiting for is you," Mr. Peres told a group of New Englanders planning to immigrate.

But at least one recent immigrant, Karine Bolton, 24, said she is afraid the predicted economic boom would change the character of Jerusalem, as developers start building more hotels and commercial buildings.

"Israel is going to start developing faster than anyone can imagine," Ms. Bolton said. "My main concern is that the city I love is going to make rapid leaps into the 21st century, and I hope it keeps some of its old world charm."

Earlier in the day at a news conference, Mr. Peres said Israel hopes to reach agreement soon with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) about releasing

thousands of Palestinian political prisoners.

Mr. Peres said the issue of Palestinian prisoners was on the agenda and he expected an agreement within weeks.

The foreign minister said he was visiting the United States now to report where the Israeli government stands.

"We are not just in the business of negotiations, but we are in a period of making a moral choice," Mr. Peres said. "I feel that we negotiate with ourselves not less than with the Palestinians... to return ourselves to a Jewish tradition which is more than 4,000 years old. We have never attempted to dominate another people in the past and we don't want to do so in the future," he said.

Later, in a television interview, Mr. Peres said the peace deal would "absolutely go through in a world with no cold war."

"It will happen, and for the simple reason that even if we didn't change and the Palestinians didn't change, the world has changed," he said on "Charlie Rose," an interview programme broadcast nationally.

Turkey, Iran and Syria to discuss Iraq

ISTANBUL (R) — The foreign ministers of Iran, Syria and Turkey meet in Istanbul Saturday for talks on Iraq, eight days after nine Iranian civilians were killed in a Turkish air raid on separatist Kurds in northern Iraq.

Foreign Ministry officials from the three countries were due to meet in Istanbul on Friday to prepare for the ministerial meeting on Iraq, the fourth held since November 1992.

At each meeting, Hikmet Cetin of Turkey, Ali Akbar Velayati of Iran and Syria's Farouk Al Sharaa have reaffirmed their support for Iraq's territorial integrity and their hostility to emergence of any independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq.

Ankara is hoping that last Friday's air strike against Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas in Zaleh camp, 110 kilometres from Turkey on the Iran-Iraq border will not spoil the atmosphere at Saturday's meeting of regional powers.

Turkey on Thursday expressed "deep sorrow" for causing Iranian casualties and has offered to make reparations.

"It has been established that a few cluster bombs aimed at anti-aircraft positions... close to the Iranian border exploded in the air, scattering parts to Iranian soil and causing loss of life and (damage to) property," a Foreign Ministry statement said.

"We are deeply sorry that Iranian citizens lost lives and property as a result of such an incident. We offer our condolences to the families of our Iranian brothers who died," it said.

Iran has said nine Iranians were killed and 19 injured in the attack, one of the biggest by the Turkish air force against the PKK, fighting for a Kurdish state in southeast Turkey.

Tehran demanded an apology and compensation for the attack, which created an anti-Turkish furor in the Iranian press.

The incident illustrated the regional tensions arising from the presence of at least 20 million Kurds whose homelands spread across the borders of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.

Baghdad has frequently protested at Turkey's cross-border raids against the PKK in northern Iraq and at Iranian artillery and air strikes against Iranian Kurdish rebels based there.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Qadhafi 'closing file on Lockerbie'

LONDON (AP) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi said Libya had no part in the Lockerbie bombing that killed 270 people five years ago and was "closing the files" on the issue. "Libya is not paying the price of the Lockerbie incident," because no verdict has been passed saying that it should, Colonel Qadhafi said in a speech in Misratah, east of Tripoli, that was broadcast Thursday by Libyan Television. Pan Am Flight 103 blew up over Scotland on Dec. 21, 1988, killing all 259 on board and 11 people in the town of Lockerbie. The U.N. Security Council has approved sanctions against Libya to pressure the country into extraditing two bombing suspects to Britain or the United States for trial. Libya has refused. "We declare that we have nothing to do with Lockerbie and we have no interest in this issue," Col. Qadhafi said in the broadcast, which was monitored in London. "We are not looking at this file and we are closing it," he said. He added that as a result of the U.N. sanctions, Libya was "paying the price of independence, liberation and emancipation, the price of being a free and sovereign country."

Nuclear inspectors arrive in Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — U.N. nuclear experts arrived in Baghdad Friday optimistic that they would make progress in their mission to strip Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction. "The objective of our mission this time is to continue our work to complete the baseline information for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team, lead reporters, he said. The inspectors' task included monitoring and verification plan declarations under the ongoing monitoring and verification plan declaration of facilities and equipment. "We expect to make useful progress," he added. Senior U.N. envoy Rolf Ekeus, head of the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM), is in Baghdad discussing with senior Iraqi officials ways to implement U.N. resolutions calling for a strict control of Baghdad's arms industry in the future.

Gunmen kill two in southeast Turkish city

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (R) — Gunmen shot dead two civilians Friday in Diyarbakir, southeast Turkey, where a spate of street killings has sown fear, officials said. They said pairs of unidentified assailants killed shopkeeper Omer Gunes and coffee-house owner Faik Bara in separate attacks. Officials gave no motive for the murders but some local journalists linked them to a feud between factions of Hizbollah, a clandestine group said to have links with Iran. Kurdish nationalists have in the past accused Hizbollah of working directly or indirectly with state security forces to assassinate Kurdish politicians and people sympathetic to the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK). The government denies the death squad charges, blaming PKK-Hizbollah rivalry for many of the hundreds of mystery murders perpetrated in the region over the past three years. This year there have been more than a score of street killings in Diyarbakir, regional capital of the mainly Kurdish southeast, where more than 10,000 people have been killed since the PKK began its fight for an independent state in 1984.

Rabin concerned about Zhirinovsky

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Friday he was worried about instability in Russia, saying wide support for Russian extremist Vladimir Zhirinovsky in December elections was a threat to the Russian Jewish community. "The fact that a man like Zhirinovsky can get such wide public support from the Russian public causes worry," Mr. Rabin told reporters. "Not just because of the sharp anti-Semitism, but because of a world view that envisions an imperial Russia, with all its implications," Mr. Zhirinovsky, who rose to prominence on the strength of his party's strong showing in Russian elections in December, has said he will establish a dictatorship should he be elected president in 1996 elections. He advocates the old borders of the Soviet Union as the borders for Russia, and has envisioned a Russian army conquering Turkey and Iraq to gain Russia access warm water ports. Mr. Zhirinovsky has also said that Jews are to blame for anti-Semitism, has charged that Jews caused both world wars, and has called for exclusively blond-haired, blue-eyed broadcasters. "Russian television, Mr. Zhirinovsky has strongly rejected per-statement rumours that his own father was Jewish. "I am concerned about the instability in the USSR, first as a Jew, regarding the Jewish community there," Mr. Rabin said. But he added that his concern was for the long run, not the immediate future. "Central factors are still in the hands of (President Boris) Yeltsin, who takes a more responsible policy," Mr. Rabin said. "God forbid in the long run, we should return to a reality of Russian imperialist policy, tsarist or communist."

Drug dealer, Saudi murderer beheaded

RIYADH (AP) — A Nigerian drug dealer and a Saudi murderer were publicly beheaded Friday, the Interior Ministry announced. The Nigerian, identified as Ahmad Mohammad Taher, was executed in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah. In the southern desert province of Najran, Khalid Ben Musfir Ben Dalama Ben Haider was beheaded for shooting to death another man, Youssef Ben Hassan Ben Musfir. The ministry gave no nationality, which usually means a Saudi national is involved. Saudi Arabia is ruled under Islamic law which prescribes beheading for certain crimes, including drug dealing and homicide. The ministry affirmed the government of King Fahd was determined to "combat by the most deterrent punishment, all kinds of drugs because of the grave harm they cause to the individual and society." Some 70 people were executed last year, most of them on drug convictions. Drug cases mainly involve Pakistanis and Nigerians. The Kingdom has an expatriate community of some five million.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Los Adventurers De L'Espace
17:41 L'Ecole Des Fais
18:50 Beaumartin
19:00 News in French
19:15 Ustuzia
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Family Matters
21:30 The Campbell
22:00 News in English
22:20

Feature Film: "Stick With Each Other"

PRAYER TIMES

05:06 Fajr
06:25 (Sunrise) Doha
11:49 Dhuhur
14:48 'Asr
17:13 Maghrib
18:33 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedeh, Tel. 617048
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 627785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terronesta Church Tel: 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851. Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Epiphanius Church Tel. 771751

Assiuta International Church Tel. 625226

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 694195

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 624932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures will significantly rise during the next two days becoming above average, with winds becoming southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp. Amman 4/16

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Aqaba 10/22
Dahsh 2/15
Jordan Valley 10/21

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 15, Aqaba 21. Humidity readings: Amman 43 per cent, Aqaba 32 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Hanna Mansour 750197

Dr. Nidal Al Mahari 751672

Dr. Khalil Al Jib 740740

Dr. Salah Al Usud 649204

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 778376

Al Asena pharmacy 637055

Naimah pharmacy 626772

Al Salim pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 649445

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Najih pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Fayez Al Oadi 248743

Al Quds Pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Yousef Abu Sa'd 980000

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

RJ Flight Information 06-533300

Queset Air Int. Airport 06-533301

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630341

Rescue 190

Rescue Police 192.621111.637777

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 634302

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 608800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 847467

Complaints 847467

Amman Municipality 787111

Complaints 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone 623101

Abdulla Telephone Repair 661101

Radin Jordan 773111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636281

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 81381302

Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642816

Akhef Maternity, J. Amn. 642412

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malha, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 661174

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 843845

Al-Musharraf Hospital 6672270

The Islamic, Abdulla 66612737

Al-Ahli, Abdulla 661646

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7771013

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7751126

Army, Marka 89161115

Queset Air Hospital 66234050

Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)533300, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)

06:25 Aqaba (RJ)

06:30 Doha (RJ)

06:50 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)

06:50 Bern (RJ)

EU official ends 3-day visit urging political, economic aid to Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — Bernhard Rhein, director of the Mediterranean, Near East and Middle East division of the Commission of European Union (EU), Friday ended a three-day visit to Jordan.

Dr. Rhein, one of the key EU Commission officials directly in charge of assistance programmes, was received Thursday by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, for Royal Highness Princess Basma, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal U Hassan.

At the meeting with Prince Hassan, discussions focused on European-Jordanian relations and the efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East.

Dr. Rhein was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that the EU supported Jordan's stand and called for continued political and economic aid to the Kingdom to assist it in carrying out its role in the peace making process.

Petra also quoted Dr. Rhein as saying that European assistance was needed to help Jordan shoulder its immense burdens.

Dr. Rhein had a separate meeting with Princess Basma and discussed increased cooperation between the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF) and the EU in projects that focus on women in development and income-generation, especially for those sectors of society that have been targeted by QAF's activities over the past 15 years.

Dr. Rhein, who was accompanied to the meeting by Fernando De Los Fayos, EU desk officer for Jordan, and Renato

8-year-old killed in school bus accident

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An eight-year-old girl died Wednesday after being run over by a school bus, in Sweifeh, a police report said.

The child, Nour Mustafa, was dropped off at her house Wednesday afternoon by a school bus driver. Neither the driver nor the supervisor who was inside the bus noticed that Nour was caught under the bus when the driver started back on his route.

The bus had dragged the girl about 15 metres before the driver heard her screaming.

The 31-year-old bus driver, identified as M.H., told police he did not notice that he had run over Nour after dropping her off in front of her house.

Soon after driving off, he said, he heard screaming and pulled over to see what was wrong.

He found Nour lying beside the wheels of the bus covered in blood, he said.

Traffic officials who investigated the accident said the victim's clothing had gotten caught in the bus door.

Nour was rushed to a nearby hospital by the bus driver, but she was pronounced dead on arrival.

Safety measures introduced by the Public Security Department (PSD) four months ago stipulate that all bus drivers must attend a driving course to learn the new related procedures regarding school children's safety when descending from school buses.

All bus drivers were instructed that they are supposed to wait and make sure that during loading or unloading children, the children cross the street safely before maintaining their destination.

A police official told the Jordan Times that the blame falls on both the driver for not looking in his sideview and rearview mirrors to make sure the girl had crossed the road safely, and on the supervisor who was in the bus during the accident and did not make sure

U.S. team expected for talks on moving cargo searches to land

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An official U.S. delegation is expected to arrive here soon for further discussions on Jordan's proposal to move sea-based searches of cargo to the port of Aqaba, informed sources said Friday.

They said the team would hold talks with senior officials on the mechanism and modalities of the proposed land-based inspections and report back to the Clinton administration, which has yet to take a policy decision on the issue.

The proposal was tabled during His Majesty King Hussein's visit to Washington in the third and fourth weeks of last month. Officials said the initial U.S. response was positive.

The plan calls for Lloyds Register of London to set up a base at Aqaba to inspect all incoming and outgoing cargo for violations of the international sanctions against Iraq.

Until now, the inspections were conducted by U.S.-led warships patrolling the Red Sea, causing severe economic losses for Jordan, whose own imports are subject to the costly delays and higher freight charges levied by ship-owners.

According to the sources, Lloyds Register representatives visited Washington last week to discuss the proposal in detail with administration officials.

Comments from U.S. naval officials in the Gulf indicated that the proposal was being circulated in U.S. military circles.

"It would be a step down for us," said Lieutenant Commander Bruce Cole, spokesman for the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command headquartered in Bahrain. "We might leave one ship there for spot checking in the early stages."

The U.S. navy usually maintains three ships in the Red Sea, focusing their attention on the Tiran Straits, the gateway to the Gulf of Aqaba. Other members of the international coalition which contributed forces to fighting Iraq out of Kuwait in early 1991 take part in the inspections on rotation.

The inspection forces, which took up place in August 1990 immediately after the U.N. Security Council imposed the sanctions against Iraq, have so far intercepted 19,350 ships, the bulk of them in the Red Sea.

Of these, 8,450 were actually boarded and inspected by American or coalition naval officers and 440 were denied total entry.

According to the sources, the next step after the American mission's visit to Jordan would be formulating a final mechanism to be in place at Aqaba and recommending it

Writers association faces strife

By Sa'da Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — President of the Jordanian Writers Association (JWA) Fakhri Ka'war attributes the recent split among JWA members over the association's coming elections to a conspiracy aimed at destroying the writers group.

Mr. Ka'war said that the conspiracy is behind the demands awarded by some members calling for activating the association. "Everybody says that the association was not true, and this is not true," Mr. Ka'war said in a roundtable meeting held at Al Umm Al Jadid Research Centre Wednesday. "The emergence of these new slogans frightens me... it is a conspiracy."

A new movement formed within the association two months ago and known as the youth initiative committee, allied with the JWA administrative body to take quick action against what he saw as inefficiency of the association.

The committee, which comprises about 43 young writers, called for injecting new blood into the association and asked the administration not to accept new members before the coming elections, scheduled for Feb. 11.

Apparently, the JWA administrative body perceived this new movement and its demands as a conspiracy aimed at undermining the association. Consequently a split occurred in the JWA membership and has developed into a serious clash over the future president of the association. The youth committee favours Jamal Najji while the other side appears to be supporting Mu'nis Razzaz.

"At the beginning, we nominated Mu'nis Razzaz, but he refused," said Mohammad Masheh, president of the Cultural and Creativity Club and one of the leading members of the youth committee. "At present, we pledge our support to Jamal Najji and we can not go back on our stand."

Mr. Masheh told the Jordan Times that the main clash between the committee and the other stream, which is supporting writer and columnist Mr. Razzaz, is political.

He said that Mr. Razzaz refused at the start to nominate himself for JWA president, but was being pressured by six political parties to run

for the post.

He added that the youth committee's support of Mr. Najji came after Mr. Razzaz's rejection of its nomination.

"We reject the notion that political parties are still dictating policies within the association and we are not supporting Mr. Razzaz on this basis," Mr. Masheh said. "We don't accept this conspiracy theory either, but we are ready for dialogue... a calm one."

Mr. Razzaz, who was present at the beginning of the four-hour discussion Wednesday, agreed and emphasised that political parties should no longer hide behind cultural and private institutions since they are now legalised and can operate openly.

"But that does not mean that a partisan should not be a member in a certain association... I personally did not consult my own party when I decided to run for the JWA elections," said Mu'nis Razzaz, who is also the secretary-general of the Jordanian Arab Democratic Party.

A panel discussion between Mr. Najji and Mr. Razzaz is scheduled to take place today (Saturday) at JWA headquarters.

Iran confirms embassy staff cuts

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Iranian embassy in Amman has confirmed that it had cut its staff at Jordan's request.

Officials said the move should not affect growing economic and political ties between the two states.

Iran has about 20 diplomats and a number of Iranian administration staff in Amman. The Jordanian mission in Tehran has two diplomats and three locally-hired staffers.

The Iranian embassy emphasised its concern to improve relations with Jordan, saying the issue should not be seen as indicating any deterioration in relations.

"We want to affirm that close relations between the two brotherly countries in which the spirit of brotherliness and affection are proceeding ahead," said the embassy statement.

"We have no doubts the wise Jordanian leadership carries the same feeling and the recent statements from it are the best evidence for this."

The embassy statement was prompted by a newspaper columnist's article last week suggesting that Iran may be behind the killing of Jordanian diplomat Wasef Imran Al Maaytan in Beirut last week.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Crown Prince receives Omani minister
AMMAN (Petra) — Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yusuf Ben Alawi paid a brief visit to Amman Thursday and conveyed a message from Sultan Qaboos to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on bilateral affairs and international issues of concern to Jordan and Oman. Mr. Alawi told Jordan Television later that his visit was within the framework of the continued consultations between the two Arab states, referring inter-Arab relations, the Omani initiative said his country was working towards achieving reconciliation among Arab states expressing hope that the joint efforts of King Hussein and Sultan Qaboos would result in the spirited solidarity.

House to meet on health issue
AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament convenes today (Saturday) to pursue discussions on the food and drugs situation, which the House started last week. In the meantime the Public Freedoms Committee at the House will meet Saturday, Sunday and Monday to listen to the views of experts on the issue of food aid drugs in the Kingdom.

Indian tourism minister arrives
AMMAN (Petra) — Indian Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation Gulam Nabi Azad Friday arrived here at the head of an official Indian delegation on a three-day visit to Jordan, during which he will hold talks with senior officials on issues of bilateral relations in the fields of tourism and civil aviation. Mr. Azad was received on arrival by Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Mohammad Adwan, the ministry's secretary General Ghassan Mufleh, the director of the Civil Aviation Authority, A.K. Al-Nabhan and Indian Ambassador to Jordan, A.K. Upadhyay. Mr. Azad and the accompanying delegation later visited King Hussein Bridge on the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.

Taxpayers dole out JD40.6m in December
AMMAN (Petra) — The Income Tax Department collected almost JD 40.6 million in December 1993 from taxpayers, compared with almost JD 36.3 million in December 1992, according to the department Director General Mansour Haddadin. Mr. Haddadin said that last month's collection constitutes 30.5 per cent of the total estimates for the year 1994. The total estimates

Environmental activity to begin in Aqaba

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Society for the Control of Environmental Pollution (JSCPEP), in cooperation with Friedrich Naumann Foundation of Germany, is organising a one-week workshop on environmental training in case studies in Aqaba from Feb. 5-10 at the Aqaba Gulf Hotel.

An environmental forum entitled, "Motor Tires and Engine Oil Waste" on Tuesday at Princess Basma Centre is also part of the programme.

A total of 30 participant non-governmental organisations representing government agencies, public and private sectors NGOs and JSCPEP members in Aqaba are expected to attend this workshop.

The programme will tackle: man and nature; local and global state of environment; population growth; environmental home management; water management and water harvesting; agriculture and environment; industrial occupational safety and environmental protection; development of the Aqaba region and its impact on the environment; saving sea water from pollution; the role of the marine station in life and the protection of the coral reef; ecotourism and environment and traffic.

Five environmental case studies will be presented to the participants who will be divided into groups to work on solutions to these problems.

During this workshop a field visit to several environmental sites will be organised.

Public and private sectors, government agencies, factories, NGOs and society members are invited to attend the Tuesday forum on motor tires and engine oil waste.

The activity will end on Thursday with final discussions and reports of the working groups.

Chinese group ends visit with guarded optimism about trade

By Ian Atalla
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Council for the Promotion of International Trade (JCPTIT) delegation ended its trip to Jordan Thursday indicating that it was guarded optimistic about prospects for enhancing future Sino-Jordanian trade cooperation.

Delegation head Ye Bing told a group of Amman World Trade Centre members that "frankly speaking, we still don't know very much about the Jordanian market."

The JCPTIT team Thursday visited the Jordan Trade Association (JTA), the Amman World Trade Centre (AWTC) and the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation (JEDCCO), where it was addressed by Marwan Awad, the secretary-general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Both the members of the JTA and Mr. Awad emphasised to Mr. Bing that Jordan wished to see greater equality in the current trade balance between the two countries.

Although official figures vary, Jordan currently imports from China a little over three times in value as it exports there.

"I think that it is our responsibility as well as yours to bridge the trade gap," Mr. Awad told the Chinese team.

In that area, he stated, discussions were underway between the two countries on how to structure Jordan's repayments of some \$47 million in debts due to China from foreign aid, and that the loans would be repaid by Jordan partly in commodities.

"Although the amount of commodities involved will be relatively small, it will give us the chance to introduce some of our products to the Chinese market."

Mr. Bing stated at the meeting with JTA members, however, that "an actual balance in bilateral trade may be very difficult to achieve."

Mr. Bing told the Jordan Times that "the two countries' economic complementarity is not very large, and Jordanian products suitable to China are few."

"The key point, and one which we are stressing very heavily to the Jordanians, is that they need to provide us with detailed information and specific lists of suitable products which we could select from. Our attitude is positive," he said, but the bottom line regarding hard benefits of any imported Jordanian commodities to China and their price range still had to be adhered to.

Mr. Bing told the Jordan Times that China's economy was currently undergoing near-explosive expansion, with last year seeing a 12 per cent economic growth rate and an overall foreign trade increase of 18 per cent. "Last year, our total import value reached \$104 billion, a 29 per cent increase over the previous year, so you see that we are looking for suitable products with great urgency."

He said that China's current main needs were in the areas of technology and infrastructure development, specifically in the areas of air, land and sea transport and transport facilities, telecommunications and communications network development, energy technology and raw materials processing technology, and modernisation of China's agricultural sector.

"All of these are top priorities for China's development. With regard to these areas, China has great demand for import. But the key issue is, once again, what products does Jordan have that are suitable for our market?"

At the Amman World Trade Centre, the AWTC's members told Mr. Bing that one important area for improvement in Sino-Jordanian commerce was in the field of banking communications.

There were no direct routes of correspondence between Jordanian and Chinese banks, and the banks from both sides had very limited knowledge of each other, which led to in-

WHAT'S GOING ON EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by artist Huda Sami Qassem at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art and photo exhibition by several Arab artists at the Balqa Art Gallery in Fuheis (Tel. 720902).
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Mohammad Al Windawi at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by artists Akram Isawi and Jamal Baddawi at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by artist Shaker Abu Ghazaleh at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.
- ★ Exhibition by Lebanese artist Hussein Madi at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the "permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists. (Tel. 643251/2)
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Makram Khaghandouqah at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition on the art of architecture at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by several Iraqi and Jordanian artists at Orfall Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).
- ★ Art exhibition by Suha Noursi entitled "Landscapes" at the Hotel Jordan Inter-Continental Gallery (8:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.).

CONCERT
★ Concert by Tunisian singer Lutfi Bushnaq and his band at the Palace of Culture at 8:00 p.m.

GOETHE-INSTITUT OPEN DAY
★ Open day at Goethe-Institut to provide information on Goethe Institutes in Germany and study at German universities by showing films, presenting short lectures, and distributing leaflets (11:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.).

Save water ... every drop counts

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.
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Hawks in pigeon holes

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN peace talks appear to be bogged down once again after the initial brief euphoria triggered by the Arafat-Peres encounter in Davos last week. For a while, the two sides seemed to be on the verge of announcing full agreement on all impending issues between them. That breakthrough, however, dissipated with the intervention of Yitzhak Rabin whose paranoid concerns about security have led him to abort every past effort to build on the Sept. 13 Israel-PLO accord.

Rabin has effectively dashed hopes that the two parties have finally succeeded in resolving the thorny issues of border control and the size of Gaza when he intervened and called for additional time to check out the painstakingly negotiated agreements between Arafat and Peres. "Certainly in a week," Rabin was quoted as saying Wednesday, "this matter will not be completed... It will take a miracle, it will take a number of weeks. There are no sacred dates."

In contrast with Rabin, Peres initially seemed more positive about his accord with the Palestinian leader. "It (signing the deal) can be done in a matter of one, two or three weeks — no more than that," Peres declared upon his arrival in Washington. What the foreign minister said later, however, remains subject to interpretation.

In any case, what is clear by now is that the Israeli prime minister and his foreign minister do not operate exactly on the same wavelength as far as their negotiations with the PLO are concerned. If the Israeli peace effort is left entirely for Rabin to control, not much can be expected to be achieved in view of his stubborn attitude on military-security doctrines.

But if peace is to materialise finally, the Israeli leaders must first get their act together. If Rabin believes so strongly in what he declared in Tel Aviv Wednesday, that Arafat cannot be trusted, then he must have the intellectual courage to say so straight in the face of the Palestinian leader instead of wasting everybody's time. And if this is indeed the case, why did Rabin so ceremoniously strike a deal with Arafat last September and signed it at no less than the White House and in front of the entire world?

"We (Israelis) have never been able to check whether Arafat keeps his promises," Rabin was quoted as complaining after the Davos encounter. The obvious thing to say here is that Israel is not expected to arrive at a peace deal on the basis of "promises" in the first place, no matter where they originate from. The less obvious fact is that Labour cannot move swiftly towards peace if the overriding mentality governing their steps is that of the Likud.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i blamed the explosions at movie houses in Amman and Zarqa and also the assassination of the Jordanian diplomat in Beirut on the Israeli Mossad network. Bassam Emoush, who is also a member of the Islamic Action Front Party, said that the attacks on Jordan fall within a systematic campaign directed against this country which is embracing Islam and democracy. The enemies of Islam and the Arabs are bent on fighting Jordan by killing the country's diplomats, causing confusion internally and weakening the Jordanian economy, charged Mr. Emoush. The writer said that these actions are being perpetrated with the aim of creating suspicion about the Islamists in Jordan and to cause a split within the ranks of the Jordanian society. He said that only through awareness and unity within the Jordanian family can these dangers be warded off and the country protected. The enemies of the Muslims, continued the writer, have been dismayed at seeing an Islamic awakening in this country and they have been bent on creating trouble by any possible means. He urged the government and Parliament to work together to foil these hostile attempts from outside.

A COLUMNIST in Sawt Al Shaab daily called public attention to the danger inherent in the use of the exhausted motor oil by Jordanian's bakeries. Nazih Qusus said that once the motor oil stations have collected a large amount of this oil they sell it to certain merchants who in turn sell it to the bakeries. The Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company used to do this but has long stopped after it was discovered that the lead in the exhausted oil was harmful to the bread and public health, continued the writer. He said at present certain people are still practising this trade and causing severe damage to public health, but no authority has done anything to stop them. Unless the concerned authorities take strict measures and impose heavy fines on these traders, the damage to public health is bound to continue and the consumers and innocent people continue to suffer as a result.

Jordanian Perspective

Preachers of the bullet should become target

THE ASSASSINATION of a Jordanian diplomat in Beirut last week is indeed of high seriousness and concern to Jordan and Jordanians, who will definitely follow their own course of action to bring the perpetrators to book. It is not a simple desire to exact revenge for the cowardly assassination that is behind the Jordanian determination to pursue the killers: we need to tell those who lurk in the underworld of international terrorism that Jordan refuses to be cowed by attacks on its sons and can and will mete out retribution to anyone who dares to even try to deviate it from its principled path.

A diplomat in every sense of the word, whether in Cairo, Kuwait or Beirut where he fell prey to an assassin's bullet, Nayeb Imran Maaytah had set an example for many in the Jordanian Foreign Ministry as to how diplomacy is conducted and how a diplomat should tread the thin lines of diplomacy. As a person and a diplomat, his death is indeed a loss to Jordan's diplomatic community.

Mr. Maaytah was the sixth Jordanian diplomat to be targeted abroad since the mid-80s and the fourth to lose his life to an assassin's bullet after Walid Balqaz in Rome, Azmi Mufti in Bucharest and Ziyad Sati in Istanbul. Mohammad Khurma, Jordan's ambassador to India, and Tayseer Touqan, the Kingdom's envoy to Italy, survived the attacks but suffered serious injuries.

Responsibility for some of the attacks was claimed by terrorist groups, while investigations have uncovered the black hands that were behind others. For one reason or another, the man on the street has not been fully informed of the findings if only because of the now-defunct information policy of letting people know what the state felt they needed to know.

I am one of those who give little credence to the claim put forth by a previously unknown group that it was responsible for Mr. Maaytah's murder. It could be nothing but a carefully planted red herring to confuse investigators. We have seen too many such incidents to be taken in by obscure telephone callers and claimants.

There is little doubt that the killing of Mr. Maaytah, Jordan's second-ranking diplomat in Lebanon, was part of state-sponsored terrorism and that is every reason that the world community should take close note of the incident and follow up with broad action.

For one thing, the assassination warrants focus since the very act brings up concern that attacks on diplomats as political messages could be on a revival course, after having ebbed in the past two or three years, along the same lines of politically motivated hijackings and hostage takings.

State-sponsored assassinations as a means to eliminate

political opposition started in recent history when Stalin sent his death squads to kill Trotsky. Since then, the world has been hundreds of politically motivated killings but did little in terms of collective action to stem them until the 1980s when such actions hit a peak after reaching the shores of the western world.

But it seems today that the preachers of the bullet are finding fresh support from states that sponsor international terrorism despite repeated experiences that such actions fail to achieve political objectives.

By and large, without state sponsorship and diplomatic umbrellas, it is very difficult indeed for assassins to escape the long reach of the law. As such, it is high time that the international community review its approach to the entire issue of state-sponsored terrorism through setting in place a series of sure-footed, definite, preemptive action.

Short of hard evidence — which, by definition, is difficult to uncover when states and diplomatic channels are involved — it is an impossible task to impose international sanctions to punish governments sponsoring international terrorism. But there are other avenues to block them.

For starters, the international community could prepare a "diplomatic blacklist" based on available evidence and remain committed to a practice of refusing "agreement" to diplomatic appointments ("agreement" here meaning the host government's approval of nominations of diplomats from other governments).

Strict enforcement of and commitment to the "diplomatic blacklist" would ensure, to a large extent, that those "diplomats" who have had "experience" in organising terrorist activities in the host countries under the cover of diplomatic missions would be denied the opportunity to repeat their performance in other countries.

By no means, however, could the "blacklist" be an answer to the problem of state-sponsored terrorism, particularly that some of those who sponsor terrorism are always scouting for "fresh talent", but it could go a long way in setting in place a mechanism which would not only function as a punitive measure but also as a preemptive gesture.

Jordan, which has paid a dear price for its consistent and principled approach to regional and international developments and placed pan-Arab interests above its own, will no doubt take the initiative in formulating action to stem state-sponsored terrorism. But it needs the encouragement and support of the international community if its initiative is to bear fruit.

By Dr. Musa Keilani

Former secretaries of state analyse world flashpoints

By Paul Malamud

WASHINGTON — Four former U.S. secretaries of state warned Jan. 28 that North Korea and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are flashpoints and potential pitfalls for U.S. foreign policy.

James Baker, Alexander Haig, Edmund Muskie and William Rogers expressed their views of the state of the world at the "Eleventh Annual Report of the Secretaries of State" conference at the State Department in Washington.

On Bosnia, Mr. Haig cautioned that it is now too late for America to intervene militarily — that the war has become a "bottomless pit." Mr. Baker added that the chance for peace in Bosnia is "over, unfortunately" and there will be a "resolution on the battlefield." Mr. Rogers demurred, asserting that he thought the parties will come to "some kind of peace."

Mr. Haig warned that "we must not let this conflict spread." To prevent such an occurrence, Mr. Haig said, the West may need to make "major North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) deployments into Macedonia."

Mr. Baker agreed that the world is now at the point with Macedonia where it was with Bosnia before the war began, and he warned that if the conflict "spills over to Macedonia" it will draw in Bulgaria, Albania and Greece. To prevent "a broader European war," the U.S. and its European allies must make "serious, substantial moves (so) that the Serbians understand the consequences of spreading the war there," he said.

Mr. Haig said the situation is complicated now that the Russians have begun to express "violent opposition to the United Nations resolutions on Bosnia." However, Mr. Baker said he thought Russia will still join with the West in "putting down a marker with respect to Macedonia." Mr. Baker said a Gulf-war-type coalition against Serb aggression should be "seriously considered... if it gets more unstable we're going to be over there sooner or later" in any case.

The participants agreed the American people will not tolerate unilateral U.S. intervention in the region, but Mr. Haig warned that Europeans will not act without "the leadership of the United States."

On Russia, Mr. Baker said he felt "the resignation of the reformers" in the Russian cabinet bodes "ill for the prospects for reform," and he criticised the administration for "temporising on the expansion of NATO." Rather than the Partnership for Peace concept embraced by NATO, Mr. Baker said the West should "guarantee" NATO membership to former Soviet satellites. Otherwise, he said, "we may be missing a great opportunity."

Mr. Rogers suggested U.S. policymakers can't "walk away" from the results of the Russian parliamentary elections, adding, "We'll have to show a little more respect for (Russia's elected) parliament" by focusing on relationships with leaders other than Mr. Yeltsin.

Mr. Haig warned of a "surge of neo-imperialism emerging from Moscow that has got to recede your blood." In his view, Russia is in the process of "regathering" the old Soviet Union together — including such states as Georgia — and is undermining Ukraine. Mr. Haig said it is a mistake to "tolerate" this "without saying a word." "Many of my friends in Europe," Mr. Haig asserted, "think Zhirinovskiy is a straw man" created by the Russian regime to bring about support in the West for the Yeltsin government.

However, Mr. Baker opined, "it's too soon to say that the reform effort in Russia is dead," noting "there's been a substantial degree of privatisation in Russia" already.

Turning to China, Mr. Haig predicted the administration will not abrogate most-favoured-nation (MFN) trading status because the "China connection" is becoming too important to U.S. business interests. Mr. Rogers agreed, predicting that "the United States will say at the end of the year that there's been improvement" in China's human rights situation, so that the MFN can be maintained. Mr. Muskie

agreed U.S. China policy should be "pragmatic... We can work with" Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping "and those who are going to succeed him."

On Japan, Mr. Baker praised the administration for doing a "good job" at "forcing open Japanese markets," but he warned that the real power in Japan lies with the bureaucracy rather than the political leadership. He added that the United States has no choice but to maintain good relations with Japan because a long-term "U.S.-Japan security relationship" is crucial to stability on the Pacific. Mr. Haig said the Clinton administration has done "superb work in the area of trade."

Regarding North Korea, Mr. Rogers said "it's up to the administration to show strength" in dealing with the North Koreans — to make it clear "they'll face deduction" if they start a war. Mr. Baker agreed that "we need to be really firm in insisting on the observance of international obligations" undertaken by North Korea on nuclear issues. The issue of North Korean adherence to non-proliferation regimes, he said, might be taken to the U.N. Security Council to put political and economic pressure on Pyongyang.

Several of the former secretaries criticised the administration for sending troops to Haiti and then terminating their mission in the face of opposition in Port-au-Prince. However, Mr. Baker concluded, it's just as well the United States "didn't insert lightly armed troops to enforce some kind of fuzzy agreement."

"Both Mr. Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin have a heck of a lot invested in this agreement and will do everything they can personally to make it work."

All four former secretaries supported continuing the economic embargo against Castro's Cuba and predicted: will soon lead to the downfall of Mr. Castro.

Mr. Haig added that the U.S. military is "unsuited" to solving issues of "values other than interests" in Third World nations and cannot force them to treat their own people humanely. Mr. Baker argued that it was a mistake to have progressed from a humanitarian feeding operation in Somalia to one of "nation-building." We got out-bargained by the secretary-general of the United Nations.

Mr. Baker said the recent Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organisation peace agreement stems from "the end of the East-West conflict" and from "America's defeat of Arab rejectionism in the Gulf." Mr. Rogers agreed that the strong U.S. defence of Kuwait offended the Israelis sufficient to make peace. Mr. Haig said the "greatest threat" to the Middle East peace process is whether Yasser Arafat can "manage his own constituency." He added the danger of swift expansion of the negotiations to include Syria is that Israeli public opinion might not be ready for it, and this could lead to a "train of the domestic situation" in Israel and possible rejection of the peace process.

Mr. Baker concluded that both Mr. Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin have "a heck of a lot invested in this agreement" and will do "everything they can" personally "to make it work."

Mr. Muskie added that political stability in the region will get "money into the area" and create international investment opportunities that will benefit all parties. — United States Information Agency

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Food and medicine allegations — 'big noise, little action'

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

The controversy resulting from the health minister's allegations about the safety of food and drugs in Jordan continued to dominate the themes in the local press of the past week. Domestic issues, the Middle East and Iraq were other topics covered by the press in editorials and opinion columns.

In tackling public safety matters in light of the minister of health's allegations, a columnist in Al Dustour daily called for a national conference on public health, noting that such a conference is timely and of paramount importance to the Jordanian citizens.

Such a conference would not only tackle questions related to food and drugs but also civil defence and matters related to dealing with the consequences of natural and safety at the work place and residential areas, said the writer.

In the view of Mohammad amin, another columnist in Al Dustour, the health minister's allegations were bound to receive support because they are directly linked to every person in the country.

The minister's views are supported by the government, since the health minister is a Cabinet member, by Parliament, whose task is to defend the public and serve national interests, and by the members of the public, who are directly concerned with the situation, said the writer.

The writer called on the minister to adhere to his stand and provide the Parliament with all the required documents to back his view.

Samir Qitami, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab, said Dr. Malhas was not the first minister to disclose corruption in his department, noting that Mohammad Alawneh, the former minister of agriculture, did the same thing and that many Cabinet members have declared similar views in private.

But the writer said that whoever dares to disclose anything that might endanger the interests of the so-called sharks and manipulators would be facing trouble. This is obvious from the ongoing fight against the minister and his statements; if the sharks have their way, their power would increase and their monopoly over public life would continue.

In the view of Tareq Masarweh, a writer in Al Ra'i, the minister of health's accusations

of the merchants resembled a shell that exploded with a loud noise but with little effect at the official level.

The writer said that the minister's action and words resulted in the formation of government committees but not in outright action on the part of the government, which possesses all the documents to incriminate the people responsible.

Members of the public in Jordan know very well that the country lacks proper control over medicine and food while the laboratories at the Jordan University Hospital have more than once proved that mothers' milk is polluted by the poisoned vegetables they eat and that the frozen meat imported by Jordan has no nutritional value at all and the Health Ministry officials know which food factories do not abide by the public health regulations.

Despite all this nothing drastic is being done to stop the damage to public health, he added. Mohammad Subeih, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that wide-scale advertising for some foodstuffs in the official media and the press is not always in the interest of the public. He said that the only way to provide protection to the consumers is through legislation that would grant it protection, additional powers to take the merchants to court and stem manipulation or selling of adulterated food and drugs.

There is no doubt that the health minister's recent statements about the merchants' non-abidance by regulations concerning public health have aroused the concern of the Jordanian people, said Sawt Al Shaab in an editorial.

The paper said that it is for this reason that this matter has assumed such controversial proportions and made both the government and the Parliament to seriously consider taking measures.

Al Dustour was all praise for the government in this matter, noting that the decision to form two committees to scrutinise the situation reflects a brave stand on the part of the government which is determined to stem malpractices and present the public with facts.

Whether the allegations about the merchants' malpractices were correct or not, one can only demand that the government tighten restrictions on factories and the merchants to ensure that the public interest is safeguarded, said Mohammad Kawash, a columnist in Al Dustour.

The writer said that one way of doing that is to strengthen the hand of the Protection of Consumers Society which can help the government maintain control over quality of products.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily commented on increasing number of handicapped persons born in the Kingdom. Nadia Dabbas said that the mere publication of

reports about the handicapped persons has psychological effects on the society.

Nothing that disability could be due to hereditary reasons or a mishap during birth, the writer said that these factors can be controlled. What should be pointed out here, added the writer, is the question of free choice of spouse before marriage.

The writer suggested that subjecting a couple to laboratory tests before marriage should be made into a law, and proper laboratories to deal with such a matter ought to be created so as to avoid having more handicapped persons which adversely affect the country's development.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily said that the Ministry of Water and Irrigation has been neglecting two important elements in its basic duty. It realises that many of the water networks are worn out and leaking, and yet it is slow in replacing the pipes, and it realises that a great number of people fail to pay their dues for water consumption, a debt that runs into millions of dinars, but it is continuing to supply these subscribers with water and not taking effective measures to collect these dues, said Nazih Qusus.

The writer said that while the public supports the ministry in its drive to search for new water resources, it demands that it pursue its other duties in the best interest of the public.

Ahmad Dabbas, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab, demanded that the public in Jordan move to save the lives of a group of prisoners unjustly being tried in Kuwait. The trials are unfair and the Jordanians in Kuwait committed no crime but are facing long prison terms and some of them are facing the death penalty, said Dabbas.

The writer said that while the United States claims to be fighting against similar atrocities in other countries, it is condoning such acts in Kuwait.

The government should also take action and work in cooperation with other Arab countries and international organisations to save Jordanians from repression and injustice, demanded the writer.

The assassination of Nayeb Maaitah, the Jordanian diplomat in Beirut, continued to attract the columnist's attention. Husni Ayyesh, a columnist in Al Ra'i, condemned the killing as a cowardly act.

The perpetrators of the crime have, by their actions, reflected by their desire to pursue practices designed to destroy Arab and Islamic countries, he said, calling on the public to remain united and collectively fight against those trying to harm innocent citizens.

George Haddad, a columnist in Al Dustour, expressed the view that the murder of Mr. Maaitah was meant as a way to

cause disarray in the joint stand of the Arab parties involved in the negotiations with Israel.

Such an action was meant to destroy the coordination that has been going on between Damascus, Amman and Beirut lately and to serve the enemy's purposes, stressed the writer.

It is important that the public in Jordan and the Arab masses at large identify the killers of the Jordanian diplomat so that sufficient precautions can be taken against their actions in the future, said Taher Al Udwan, a columnist in Al Dustour.

The writer said it is the prime responsibility of the Lebanese government to apprehend the culprits, but it is also the duty of every citizen to be aware of the danger and contribute towards foiling similar attacks in the future. He stressed that the criminals ought to be fought on all fronts and by all possible means to prevent them from dictating their will on the people.

An Arab League decision to convene and discuss prospects of reducing the effects of the boycott against Israel came under attack by Fuhed Al Fanek, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily.

The writer said that there is nothing to justify such a move at a time when no progress has been made along any of the Arab-Israeli tracks and while Israel totally disregards U.N. resolutions concerning withdrawals from occupied territories.

The meeting planned for March is like asking the Arab countries to commit suicide under the pressure of the U.S.-Israeli alliance, charged the writer.

Israel and the United States are bent on using all their cards to impose their will on the Arabs and force them to accept their humiliating conditions for peace, said Ibrahim Al Absi in Al Ra'i daily.

As one facet of doing this, said the writer, the United States has just announced its plan of highly sophisticated war sales to the Jewish state.

It is not enough that Israel possesses a formidable arsenal of nuclear and chemical weapons for use against the Arabs, the American, insist that they continue to corral the Arabs into accepting Israel's terms or else face the consequences, said the writer.

It is enough for one to read reports about the thousands of Iraqi and Somali children dying every day to realise the magnitude of injustice befalling these two nations as a result of the siege imposed by the U.S.-led western world, said Sultan Al Hattab in Al Ra'i daily.

The writer said that thousands of children, women and old people are continually facing death in the name of the international legitimacy supported by the United Nations which falls under the influence of the western powers.

After three years of unity Yemenis find it hard to live together

By Assem Abdel-Mohsen
Reuters

ADEN — The sign on the door of the luxury hotel in Aden reads "The carrying of janbais and arms is banned inside the hotel. Please hand them over to security."

To the dismay of people in this former capital of South Yemen, the sign is simply ignored by northern visitors who saunter in with janbia traditional daggers protruding proudly from leather belts round their middles.

The carrying of arms, legal in the north and banned in the south, is a poignant example of how three years of unity have done little to bridge differences developed over many generations between the two parts of Yemen, diplomatic and political sources said.

North and South Yemen had been separate for hundreds of years and their historical experiences have been different — politically, economically and culturally.

"It is difficult to uproot such deep experiences in such a short time," one diplomat said.

The north, based on its mountain-top capital Sanaa, was ruled by imams who held both religious and political sway over reclusive tribal clans for about 1,000 years until they were swept away in the 1962 revolution. It has since been ruled, with one exception, by a series of military leaders.

The south was under the Ottoman Empire for hundreds of years before the 1839 British colonial occupation of the port city of Aden that had been an outward looking trading post for centuries. It was ruled by a pro-Moscow Marxist secular party from independence in 1967 to the May 1990 merger.

The merger was seen at the time as a dream solution to end impoverished Yemen's political isolation and jointly develop promising oil finds.

But a Yemeni political source said it soon fell victim to deep mistrust between the conservative leaders of the north

and leftwing secular southerners.

This burst into open rivalry last July, paralysing political and economic life and threatening to tear the country apart once again.

A national accord meant to heal the rift was clinched by an all-party committee last Tuesday, but there are differences over when it should be signed and where and politicians are privately sceptical about its chances of success.

The Aden man in the street, in contrast, is wondering openly if signing the accord by President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the ruler of Sanaa, and his southern rival Vice President Ali Salem Ali Beedh will help improve his deteriorating living standards.

"We were better off before unity. The value of the local currency has gone down by 400 per cent since the merger," Mr. Abdou, a junior civil servant in Aden, said in a typical comment.

Mr. Beedh told a recent

meeting of his Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) the economic crisis had "forced many respectable families in the south to search in garbage for something to eat."

Southerners were shown by world bank figures to have been better off than their more numerous northern brethren before the union and despite perennial poverty, enjoyed better health and other services under a socialist regime.

They now say the size of their former state and its economic resources represent two-thirds of the size and national wealth of the unified country.

"Yet we are being discriminated against," a former southern diplomat said. "My salary is one third less than that of my northern colleagues holding the same rank in the embassy," he said.

Northern sources say southerners hold some 300,000 civil service and public sector jobs in unified Yemen compared with 60,000 northerners.

Neither figure could be independently confirmed.

But the population of the north is put at 11 million against two million in the south.

The armies and security forces of the two parts have yet to be fully integrated and two local currencies are still in use, although they have a fixed exchange value.

Civil laws and educational systems are different. The north is dry but there is a brewery in the south where there is no ban on alcohol.

The majority of women in the north wear thick veils that only show their eyes. Such veils are rare in the south where women are more liberated and many go out in western dress.

"Apart from a united flag and national anthem, *tuta* appears to be the only thing holding Yemenis together," an opposition source said of the traditional embroidered skirt that most Yemeni men wear around their hips.

The failure of a human rights bureaucracy

Following is a January 1994 Amnesty International report on the human rights situation in Tunisia:

There are few countries where human rights have a higher profile than Tunisia. Praise of human rights appears in nearly every speech by nearly every public figure. Human rights are cited daily in press articles, and several major conferences a year relate to human rights. Tunisia is the seat of the *Institut arabe des droits de l'homme* (Arab Institute for Human Rights), it hosts an Amnesty International Section and in November 1992 it was the venue for the African Regional Meeting of the World Conference on Human Rights. At the United Nations, Tunisian officials sit on most of the U.N. committees dealing with human rights. Tunisia has ratified nearly all U.N. human rights instruments and regularly submits, on time, its reports to the appropriate committees.

Several government ministries contain a unit which specialises in human rights; there is also a principal presidential adviser for Human Rights, an ombudsman and a state-appointed Higher Committee for Human Rights and Basic Freedoms. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is apparently to be found in all police stations, and all new police recruits are said to attend human rights courses. Numerous brochures on human rights are printed by government agencies. A human rights medal has been instituted and a special human rights chair created to introduce human rights courses into the country's university law faculties.

As a result of its high international human rights profile, its constant emphasis in speeches on the importance of these rights and its appointment of human rights officials and commissions, the Tunisian government should have, and is probably widely perceived as having, an excellent human rights record. Sadly, the reality is very different. The basic rights to life, liberty and security of person and to freedom from torture or arbitrary detention contained in Articles 3, 5 and 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have been consistently violated.

Over the past three years thousands of suspected political opponents have been subjected to arbitrary arrest; held in illegally prolonged incommunicado detention; tortured; and imprisoned after unfair trials. At least eight detainees have died under torture. Safeguards enshrined in Tunisian law and international standards have been systematically ignored.

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The circle of repression, which began in 1990 to 1991 with the wholesale arrest of members and suspected supporters of the Islamic party *Al Nahda* (Renaissance), has expanded and now embraces members of leftist parties; relatives and friends of those already detained; and human rights activists. The forms of repression are varied and include arbitrary arrest, short-term detention, administrative control, house searches, repeated summonses to the police station and refusal to issue passports and business licenses.

Amnesty International has written a series of reports raising serious concerns in Tunisia over the past few years. The government has responded by appointing human rights advisers; a commission of inquiry into Amnesty International's allegations; an ombudsman. But the government has denied the existence of systematic violations; it has participated in a cover-up; it has failed to bring perpetrators to justice and it has, in effect, justified gross human rights violations against suspected supporters of illegal groups. By so doing the authorities have allowed human rights violations to be committed with impunity in Tunisia.

As human rights have continued to deteriorate it has become increasingly clear that without government determination to enforce human rights standards, the appointment of a human rights bureaucracy or the ratifying of treaties have little effect on the reality of the human rights situation in the country. The authorities' boast that no emergency legislation has been introduced should be seen in the light of their systematic failure to respect the safeguards and limits enshrined in the existing Criminal Procedure Code. Members of the security services have committed human rights violations with impunity. Judges, magistrates and prosecutors, by their silence, acquiescence and failure to investigate violations, have failed to fulfil the solemn obligations of their office. Officials up to the highest level of

the ministries of justice and the interior have condoned flagrant abuses. The battery of officially-appointed human rights advisers, powerless to prevent violations, spend their time defending Tunisia's human rights record to the outside world rather than defending and protecting those who suffer from human rights abuses in Tunisia.

The country is not unique. In this report on Tunisia, Amnesty International shows how a sophisticated human rights language and high-profile human rights officers can fail to prevent the perpetration of systematic, serious human rights violations.

Chapter One describes the background to the human rights violations of 1990 to 1993 and the machinery set up in Tunisia between 1991 and 1993, much of it in response to adverse criticism of Tunisia's human rights record. Chapters two to four describe in more detail the system which has facilitated human rights violations, particularly prolonged incommunicado detention and torture, and Amnesty International's efforts on behalf of the victims of such violations and government responses in particular cases.

The sentencing of political detainees in unfair trials, often under laws which permit the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, has meant that thousands of people have been jailed unjustly in Tunisia. Sometimes suspects have been tried several times (some have been tried for a second time in absentia while actually serving prison sentences, or have been immediately rearrested on release and tried for the same offence). Amnesty International sent observers to trials in 1991 and 1992 and has documented trial violations in two mass trials in the Bouchoucha and Bab Saadoun military courts of alleged plotters in 1992.

The Tunisian government and its human rights machinery have failed to investigate and stop the cases of prolonged incommunicado detention and torture brought to its attention since 1991.



New Bridgestone centre opens

AMMAN — A new Bridgestone centre has recently been opened in Mecca Street here to provide marketing and after sale services, including maintenance, for the Bridgestone high performance tyres, which are especially designed for high-speed cars.

The centre is equipped to assemble and disassemble these tyres and provide wheel-balancing in a short period of time. The new centre seeks to increase mileage

and prolong the tyre's life span through the technical explanation it provides.

On this occasion, Director General of Bridgestone's Middle East Department, Oda Gori arrived here Friday on a two-day working visit during which he will obtain first-hand information on the Jordanian market and hold talks with Yanal Bustami, director general of Jamil Bustami and Sons Company in Jordan on marketing the tyres in the Kingdom.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East providing education, health and relief and social services to Palestine refugees requires a

REALITY DATA BASE ADMINISTRATOR

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Essential qualifications are:

1. University degree in business administration or computer science, or a related subject.

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Serb psychics say God punishing West for sanctions

By Philippa Fletcher
Reuters

BELGRADE — The rain and snowstorms which have caused havoc in West Europe and the United States in recent weeks come as no surprise to Milija Vujanovic.

She predicted them months ago, along with fires like the ones which ravaged southeast Australia this month and disasters like the oil spill in Puerto Rico on Jan. 7.

Here is no end-of-the-century doomsday scenario, but a forecast of the price the West will pay for imposing international sanctions on Serbia for its interference in the civil war in neighbouring Bosnia.

Mr. Vujanovic is an actress-turned astrologer. She added Regulus to her name after she entered into a heavenly marriage with a hitherto unknown star. She is also a star in her own right.

She has a regular weekly show on Yugoslav Television, one of several clairvoyants who broke into political forecasting after Yugoslavia began to fall apart in 1991.

"They should not wonder, those who condemn us today, why nature, sky, earth, water

and fire are judging them. And it will be even worse," she told viewers last week.

Most livelihoods in what is left of Yugoslavia have been destroyed in the economic collapse brought about by sanctions.

Star-gazing and faith healing are thriving as hyperinflation eats away at everyday certainties.

The crippling effects of the embargo on health and morale provide fertile ground for professional psychics in a country where superstition has strong roots.

The black and white magic practised in medieval Europe clung on in parts of rural Yugoslavia through the communist period and has recently found new life.

The psychics claim to have direct links to God and make liberal use of crosses, icons and other religious talismans.

Their musings are targeted at the psychological and physical bruises of a people shunned by the outside world and contain heavy doses of nationalism and xenophobia. All this makes them a convenient, if sometimes fanciful, counterpart to official propaganda, which blames the international community for all Serbia's woes.

Ms. Vujanovic tells her viewers the European Union's central computer in Brussels is marked 666, the sign of the devil, and goes crazy when the word "Christ" is punched in. Americans are unbelievers, she says, because they pronounce God as "Gad" which means "bastard" in Serbian. Serbs, on the other hand, are depicted as a celestial people protected by God, a fact clearly shown by the divine justice of the last few weeks.

Many people in Belgrade scoff at such extremism, but admit it strikes a chord with a part of the nation whose morale is at an all time low. Sanctions hit the innocent hardest.

There is no disputing the fact that business is booming in the extra-sensory world. Zoran Ramovic runs an agency of parapsychologists, bioenergy healers and clairvoyants based in a glass-walled Belgrade business centre.

It claims to find missing friends and relatives, release people from the influence of sects or evil spells and heal illnesses ranging from cancer to the common cold.

Prices start at 50 German marks (\$29), about five months salary for the average Serb, but that does not seem to put them

off. Last week his office was flooded with people when agency star Ljubisa Trgovcevic announced he would waive his usual 100 marks (\$57) fee for fortune-telling.

There were so many people, Mr. Trgovcevic was forced to flee an angry crowd of disappointed customers.

"If Trgovcevic had known how many Belgraders haven't got a single mark, let alone 100, and fear for their own fate and that of their families, and do not know where to turn, he would not have made the mistake so easily," said the newspaper *Borba*.

Three times a week, Mr. Ramovic's staff appear on television, and tell viewers "about their future." The news is not always good. In a recent show Mr. Trgovcevic told a man his wife would commit suicide next month.

There is some tension among the psychics, who compete not just for followers, but for cash in a highly commercialised world.

Mention of Ms. Vujanovic's name evokes a careful put-down from Mr. Ramovic, an entrepreneur who says his extra-sensory powers were conferred on him by a saint living in southern Serbia.

The cabinet debate... issue again and approved selling 35,000 cartons to an Arab state. The remaining 10,000 cartons thought to contain some torn bags were re-examined at GAM laboratory and were still found fit for consumption, he said.

Therefore, a decision was issued recommending the use of the remaining quantity to

the ministry to keep this quantity and not to sell it in the local market, he said. The ministry presented the issue before the Council of Ministers where some of its members proposed that the quantity be sold to local dairy factories or be re-exported since it was fit for consumption. But the dairy factories refused to purchase this quantity, fearing press campaigns which were launched by "some parties," he said.

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U.S.-Jordan ties consolidated

(Continued from page 1)

King Hussein," and "Long live the King."

"We are so happy to see the King in good health. We have been awaiting this moment for six months," Captain Mohammad Al Khleeh told the AP.

"We are proud of you," King Hussein told the troops.

"We wish that this army always serves so justly and for peace. We are confident that you will keep the peace here," the King said.

The King shook hands with all the officers and then joined them for lunch in the battalion's dining-room.

"I am very, very happy to see the Jordanian U.N. peacekeeping forces preserve peace and life in the region, which is their duty and obligation," the King told reporters.

"My hopes are that the conflict is coming to an end and that we will have peace in the region before too long," he said.

King Hussein, who was accompanied by Her Majesty Queen Noor, was received upon his return home by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, members of the Royal family, Prime Minister Majali and other officials.

Israel Radio that there were differences between negotiators from the army and from the foreign ministry on tactics.

"There are different points of view stemming from the different roles," Gen. Barak said. "Our role is to ensure that any agreement... allows our commanders to know what is permitted, and what is forbidden."

"It is very important to be precise, detailed and clear," he added.

The chief-of-staff insisted on army control of Jewish settlements and their immediate environs in the proposed autonomy.

Gen. Barak has gone farther in criticising Mr. Peres, according to reports of an earlier meeting between Mr. Barak and Mr. Rabin published in the daily *Yediot Achronot* on Friday.

Gen. Barak accused Mr. Peres of eroding Israel's positions on security matters in the talks with Mr. Arafat.

Mr. Peres, in turn, said the

Arafat may not meet Peres

(Continued from page 1)

army was "almost obsessive" on details, *Yediot* reported.

Mr. Rabin played down the differences. "In every discussion there are people with different opinions, in the foreign ministry in the security establishment," he said.

"We're not discussing issues of principles, but their translation into the everyday."

Gen. Barak suggested Israel force a crisis with Mr. Arafat to make him understand that Israel will not cross certain security lines, *Yediot* said.

"Let's force him up against a wall, one wrapped in cotton wool, but made of steel," it quoted him as telling Mr. Rabin.

Yediot said Rabin was heeding his generals.

It quoted Nabil Shaath, the chief Palestinian negotiator, describing the situation as the talks in Davos wrapped up: "Almost everything was ready and suddenly Peres said: 'I have to make a final call to Mr. Rabin.' His face was radiant, he went to make the call, when he returned his face was crest-

tallen. Rabin behaves oddly... he behaves as someone who acts from anger."

Mr. Arafat's Fateh faction of the PLO called a three-day mourning strike in the Gaza Strip on Friday to mark the army's killing Salim Muwafi, a leading wanted Palestinian underground fighter, the day before.

Mr. Muwafi's death underscored how the fact that the fighting continuing in the Gaza Strip despite the Sept. 13 PLO-Israel accord can undermine the talks.

"With what is happening in the street, the situation might become worse," Tawfik Abu Khussa, a local Fateh leader, told Israel army radio. "Today it is hard to control the street."

But Fateh leaders denied that there was an official call to a return to the armed struggle.

Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur told army radio that the army would continue to pursue wanted men, while the government would call on Mr. Arafat to restrain Palestinian fighters.

Yemeni accord delayed

(Continued from page 1)

(YSP) have delayed the possibility of the meeting on the planned date."

Mr. Iriyani did not spell out the new conditions but press reports have referred to YSP demands that included the need for "constitutional and legal guarantees" before the signing could take place, explaining that for example the agreement had to be first endorsed by parliament.

On the other hand, the newspaper *Shouri*, a weekly YSP mouthpiece carried a party denial of any fresh conditions.

The confusion was reflected in the military field.

The draft accord specifies that soldiers must stay in barracks and pull away from cities where they have spread out. It also demanded the speedy integration of military units from the north and south.

Armed units are still segregated through the past three years of union.

Southern military units had moved towards the oilfields in their vicinity, and northern military units in turn deployed in a manner to cut off further reinforcements to them.

In Aden, the YSP accused the northerners of having sent fresh reinforcements recently to southern and eastern regions.

In a party statement, the southern Yemenis said their *Basheeb Brigade* deployed in the north had meantime intercepted and confiscated on Tuesday a truckload of *Strella* shoulder-fired anti-aircraft weapons and other arm destined for the northern units who have deployed in the south.

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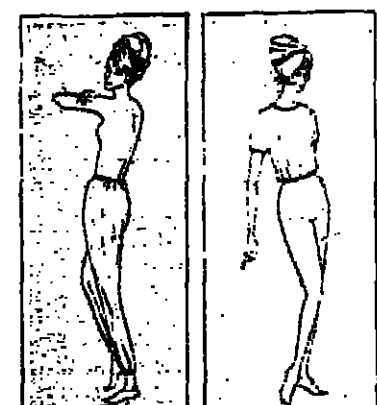
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GOOD NEWS



Currency dealers see dollar reaching DM 1.85 and yen strengthening to 105 per dollar

This article is submitted by Naser Nabulsi, private client group, Merrill Lynch-Dubai

Overview

Fundamental view: The U.S. dollar lost ground against both the Deutschmark and the yen this week. Dollar weakness against the mark can be attributed to expectations that Fed tightening will come later than previously expected, and the view that the Bundesbank will not raise official rates of this Thursday's council meeting. But we continue to expect a 50 basis point cut in German rates this quarter, and a 25 basis point rise in U.S. rates in the second quarter. As three-month German rates fall from 5.7% to 4.0% in 12 months, we expect the DM to reach DM/\$1.85. Yen strengthening has been due to increased pessimism regarding prospects for a U.S.-Japan trade agreement. If measures to open Japan's market to imports are unsuccessful, the burden of reducing Japan's huge current account deficit would fall on further yen appreciation. We expect the yen to strengthen to 105 JPY/\$ in 12 months in light of slow progress in correcting Japan's trade imbalance.

Technical view: The dollar was generally on the defensive during the week ended Jan. 28 as the greenback posted week-to-week losses against four of the six currencies we most regularly discuss. In the end, the dollar index lost 0.2% for the period. At this point, momentum for the index appears to have peaked and sentiment is viewed as being generally overbought. These conditions, together with the inability to penetrate important resistance at 97.50-98.00, imply that an important medium term top — marking the end of the rally from last September's low — may be at hand. Thus, the medium term outlook continues to favour the currencies. Nearby support is just above 94.00, with benchmark support at 90.29.

Japanese yen

Fundamental view: The Japanese yen continued to strengthen against the dollar this week, moving to 108 yen/dollar. The U.S. and Japan have failed to resolve trade differences, and markets have become increasingly pessimistic regarding prospects for an agreement in time for talks between Mr. Hosokawa and Mr. Clinton on Feb. 11. Japan's current account surplus, at \$132 billion in 1993, is far above politically acceptable levels. If measures to open Japan's domestic market to imports are unsuccessful, the burden of current account adjustment would fall on further yen appreciation. Friday's compromise between Mr. Hosokawa and the LDP on political reform legislation is another plus for the yen. Increased political cooperation should lead to a strong fiscal stimulus programme, which would support the stock market and keep bond yields higher than otherwise. The result would be increased capital inflows from abroad. We expect the yen to strengthen further to 105 yen/dollar in 12 months.

Technical view: The Japanese yen gained 1.4 per cent against the U.S. dollar last week, and was the strongest currency of the six we most regularly monitor. At present, short term sentiment is neutral and medium term readings remain oversold. Short term

momentum is upwardly biased, but medium term oscillators are only now bottoming. This evidence, plus the fact that last week's strength was enough to at least temporarily break through the five-month old downtrend channel, suggests that the underlying long term uptrend is reasserting itself. The ability to hold support at 113-114 U.S.\$ also adds substance to this possibility. The rally in recent days through 108 implies continued strength toward 105.50-106.

Deutschmark

Fundamental view: The dollar fell back to DM/\$1.73, losing its upward momentum. Dollar weakness can be traced to the view that U.S. interest rates will not be raised as quickly as was previously expected. The resignation of Fed vice chairman David Mullins, who is considered an anti-inflation hawk, may have reinforced this sentiment. The overwhelming view from Germany is that the Bundesbank will not cut the discount rate at this Thursday's council meeting. While U.S. and German monetary action may not be imminent, we continue to expect a 50 basis point cut in German rates this quarter, and a 25 basis point rise in the U.S. federal funds rate in the second quarter. News on wage and consumer price inflation in Germany continues to be surprisingly positive, and the U.S. economy appears to have maintained strong momentum in January following fourth quarter growth at a 5.9% annual rate.

We continue to look for German 3-month money rates to fall to 4.0% or less by the end of this year compared with 5.7% currently. We maintain our 12-month target of DM/USD 1.85, and expect the dollar to reach the DM/USD 1.80 level in 3 months.

Technical view: The Deutschmark rallied 0.6% versus the U.S. dollar last week. Short term sentiment is near overbought, but the important medium term readings remain oversold. Although short term momentum is in an uptrend, medium term oscillators are still bottoming and have not yet broken their downtrend. That could occur this week. All of this generally bolsters the argument that a currency low is being put into place. Important support remains indicated in the area of 1.755, with resistance at 1.65-1.66. The mark/yen cross moved below 63 last week to the lower end of its multi-month trading range.

This potential support is important because, though not oversold, medium term momentum for the cross is evidencing signs of bottoming. Given that both individual currencies are expected to rally versus the U.S. dollar in coming weeks, this bottoming process raises the prospects for potential DM relative strength in a generally firm currency environment. While 60 remains important support, resistance in the 65.50-66.50 range will be monitored for a potentially important breakout.

Pound sterling

Fundamental view: The British pound backed down from its six-month high against the Deutschmark, trading at DM/GBP 2.59. This week's depreciation cannot be tracked to any fundamental factors, although data on foreign exchange reserves suggest that the Bank of England may have intervened against the pound. Greater signs of economic strength — continued improve-

ment in the labour market and evidence of buoyant consumer spending — have reduced market expectations of prospects for a cut in base rates. Concern about job security is a major factor inhibiting consumer sentiment, and improved prospects for employment should bolster confidence.

We believe base rates will be cut by 50 basis points later in the second quarter, once the impact of April 1 tax increases is assessed. But rates will decline by much less this year than in Germany, leading to pound appreciation against the DM. We are expecting a rise in the pound to DM/GBP 2.65 in three months and DM/GBP 2.70 at six- and twelve-month horizons. If the pound rises much beyond the DM/GBP 2.70 level, the Bank of England would be pressured to cut rates to protect the competitiveness of U.K. exporters. Plenty of slack capacity should limit concern of stimulating demand-driven inflation. The pound was little changed against the dollar this week, trading near U.S.\$/GBP 1.49. We are forecasting pound depreciation against the dollar to U.S.\$/GBP 1.46 in 12 months as U.S. short-term interest rates rise by 50 to 75 basis points by the end of 1994.

Technical view: The British pound rallied almost 0.3% versus the U.S. dollar during the week ended Jan. 28 and in the process moved to the top end of its long-standing 1.47-1.51 U.S./dollar range. Sentiment is neutral to near oversold. However, medium term momentum remains constructive. All in all, our long-standing support/resistance parameters remain unchanged: A break down through \$1.46-\$1.47 would imply a potential test of important long term support at \$1.40-\$1.42, while a rally through \$1.55 would set the stage for a challenge of long term resistance at \$1.60. The DM cross-rate may be peaking. The recent trading range has been accompanied by deteriorating momentum.

If this deterioration continues, a decisive break of 2.60 could allow for 2.58, then 2.53-2.55. While 2.68 is still nominally possible, important resistance at 2.62 has to be monitored closely.

Swiss franc

Fundamental view: The Swiss franc is little changed against the DM since a week ago, trading at SF/DM 0.84. But the franc appreciated to SF/USD \$1.47 as a result of dollar weakening. The franc remains near a multi-year high against the DM due to indications of continued economic recovery, led by private consumption. Consumer confidence has improved steadily in recent months. This stands in contrast to the apparent "double dip" pattern of Germany's recession. German industrial production hit a new cyclical low in November.

We expect substantial cuts in DM short-term interest rates over the next twelve months — 170 basis points — but no change in Swiss rates. This would leave both rates at 4.0%, with a risk that German rates may fall further. Our 12-month forecast calls for further strengthening to SF/DM 0.82. We expect the franc to depreciate to SF/USD \$1.52 in 12 months, as short-term U.S.\$ rates rise modestly in 1994 against a backdrop of healthy economic growth.

Technical view: The Swiss franc fell almost 0.3% against the U.S. dollar last week and remains within its trading range of recent weeks. Short term sentiment is neutral, while medium term measures are near oversold. At the same time, short term momentum appears to be peaking even as medium term oscillators are constructive. Thus, despite some possible near term weakness, the prospects for a medium term rally appear to be reasonably good. In that regard, a rally decisively through 1.435 SF/USD \$ would allow for a test of this October high at 1.39-1.40.

Even taking this into account, the dominant (from September 1992) downtrend remains intact and has eventual objectives to (and possibly through) 1.535-1.545, with intervening support at 1.50-1.51. The DM cross-rate has recently been below .84, but short term rates of change are now upwardly biased, implying at least a near term rally. However, medium term momentum oscillators remain weak. As long as that remains the case any upcoming strength is likely to be temporary. In that regard, a test of the 1990 low near .81 may still be forthcoming. Resistance exists at .865-.87.

Canadian dollar

Fundamental view: The Canadian dollar depreciated to C\$/U.S.\$1.31 this week — close to mid-December's six-year low of C\$/U.S.\$1.34 — despite news of strong gains in consumer and business confidence. The Bank of Canada intervened to prevent further weakening. We continue to view the C\$ as having overshoot its fundamental value. The C\$ should gradually take back losses incurred since March 1993 as the foreign exchange market is reassured by favourable news regarding the federal and provincial deficits. Our fiscal optimism stems from expectations of strong, export-led growth in 1994. According to OECD, Canada's budget deficits are more cyclically sensitive than those of any other OECD country. We project 3.2% GDP growth in 1994, with risks to the upside. Signs of a pick-up in the U.S. economy reinforce our optimism regarding prospects for Canadian exports. Further supporting the C\$ are bond yields above those in the

major European currencies and unit labour cost growth well below the U.S. pace. Our 12-month target remains at C\$/U.S.\$ 1.24.

Technical view: The Canadian dollar fell 1.0% against the U.S. dollar over the past week, making it the weakest of the six major currencies we most regularly monitor. Short term sentiment is constructive, and although medium term readings are only neutral, they have been deteriorating. While 13-week rate of change oscillators have been constructive, there are signs of deterioration and the inability of the currency to respond in recent weeks is a potential sign of weakness.

Nearby support exists at 1.35 C\$/U.S.\$ and \$1.365. Medium term resistance remains at 1.24-1.25, with intervening resistance at 1.28-1.29. The DM/C\$ cross-rate moved under 1.32 last week, and like the DM/USD \$ cross-rate, momentum is peaking. While an eventual test of 1.35 or higher remains possible, an intervening correction (with support at 1.25-1.26) would not be terribly surprising.

Australian dollar

Fundamental view: The Australian dollar continued to rally last week, moving to just above U.S.\$/A\$0.71. The A\$ has now strengthened by 10% since the beginning of October. The A\$ is being supported by good GDP growth prospects, strengthening commodity prices, favourable current account news, and bond yields that are now above those in the major European currencies. Australia's economy is expected to grow by 3.5% in 1994 — with a chance of reaching 4% — much better than in Japan or in most of Europe. Positive news on the budget deficit this week is a reflection of stronger GDP and employment growth. The CRB index has risen by 3% since December, and by 10% over the past six months. Australian commodity prices have risen considerably from September lows.

The A\$ will be especially sensitive to the condition of Japan's economy, the destination of 25% of Australia's exports. Australia's current account has been improving over the last six months. We expect the A\$ to appreciate further to U.S.\$/A\$ 0.73 in twelve months on the strength of improving prospects for commodities.

Technical view: The Australian dollar advanced 0.9% relative to the U.S. dollar during the week ended Jan. 28, making an eight-month high. Moreover, the currency could be on the verge of breaking a multi-year downtrend. In fact, the currency has now broken through a trendline that had been in effect since late 1991. While there is important chart resistance in the .70-.72 U.S./A\$ range, if this area is penetrated, probabilities would significantly increase that the entire post-1988 downtrend was finished and that a new long term uptrend had begun.

The currency is now testing that range, but given the overbought nature of momentum, a reaction may be forthcoming. While benchmark support exists at \$0.65-\$0.66, there is important intervening support at \$0.68-\$0.69.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY FEBRUARY 5, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: This is a good day for engaging in activities that you truly enjoy and to strengthen your philosophy of life so that your future becomes more satisfying as you develop fascinating new plans for the days ahead.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) In your desire to have a good time, be careful that you do not force good friends who may have more pressing matters on hand.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) A fine day to get any civic duties accomplished in a most efficient and exact manner. Thus you gain much prestige, but inadvertence would be unfortunate.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Out into the fine, leaping world of activity and progress early today, since there is every opportunity to meet wonderful people, learn about new trends and systems, etc.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A good opportunity is yours now to confer with trusted advisors and experts who can solve whatever problems may be yours at this time.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Getting together informally with associate on this free day can bring about fine rapport and do more to help your chances for success in the future.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) A very good day to put all those tasks behind you that

have been accumulating, especially if you employ labour-saving devices on your tasks.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Having a wonderful time should be uppermost in your mind today and tonight, so be sure you see beautiful or barber early in the morning to have fun.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Getting abode in better order and scrupulously clean should be uppermost in your mind today. Strive for greater harmony with those living with you.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A day for much activity — first getting surroundings in order, then shopping, visiting with good friends, seeing those difficult to reach during week, etc.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Study well surroundings, real estate in the morning and plan what has to be done in order to increase its value and comfort.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Think over carefully just what it is you want most in life from a personal angle and then take the right steps that will lead you in such direction.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) It is very important that whatever you do today be ethical since much behind-the-scenes activity can be very trying and only if you work on God's side can it be successful.

Americans face fight for Vietnam market share

HANOI (R) — U.S. firms, now given free rein to do business in Vietnam following the lifting of Washington's trade embargo, will have to fight for their share of a market in which Asian and European competitors have a firm foothold.

But there is room for the Americans as well as their rivals from Taiwan, France, South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia and other countries with considerable investments here, businessmen and Vietnamese officials say.

With U.S. firms on the sidelines, non-U.S. investment of \$7.8 billion has been pledged for 850 projects in Vietnam.

The government is looking for foreign direct investment of \$12 to \$15 billion by the year 2000 to sustain the upgrading of crumbling infrastructure, industrialisation and annual economic growth of eight per cent. "It's going to be a scramble

here," said Eugene Matthews, an American businessman who has lived in Vietnam since 1990. "The country's so young in its economic development, there's room for everyone in every field."

But companies coming in fresh after President Bill Clinton's scrapping of the three-decade embargo on Thursday face an uphill task.

Firms already in place have a big advantage and will intensify their operations to compete with newcomers. Mr. Matthews, president of the Ashta International investment firm, said. Start-up costs are much greater than they used to be.

Few residents expect a big rush of American money, though U.S. brand names and advertising could suddenly become more prominent and more U.S. businessmen will come in to assess prospects.

A senior Vietnamese offi-

cial, Dr. Nguyen Mai, pinpointed oil and gas, construction, property, banking, agricultural equipment, manufacturing and consumer goods as areas in which U.S. firms have good prospects.

But they might be cautious in moving in because of Vietnam's poor infrastructure, Dr. Mai said.

Some had claims to assets in former South Vietnam, lost when the Vietnam war ended in 1975, and would want to resolve these before moving onto new ventures. Talks between the two governments on claims are expected to start later this month.

"We hope that, although they may return to their so-called old market in the south or penetrate new markets in the north, they will take time to study and understand the situation here," Dr. Mai said.

The upgrading of roads,

ports, telecommunications, bridges and other basics is a top priority, and one where U.S. firms could score.

The World Bank and Asian Development Bank plan concessional loans to Vietnam, mostly for infrastructure projects, of over \$1 billion each over the next three years.

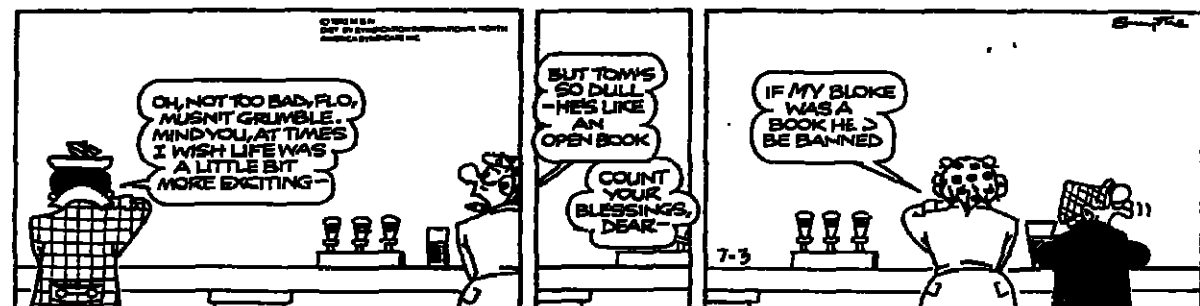
More than 30 U.S. companies — some represented by their subsidiaries in Singapore, Bangkok or Hong Kong — have opened offices in Vietnam, including big names like Citibank, Bank of America, General Electric, Baker Mackenzie, Caterpillar, Philip Morris, IBM, Digital Equipment Corp. and Motorola.

Under relaxations of the embargo by Mr. Clinton and his predecessor George Bush, they have been able to negotiate and sign contracts for implementation now it has been lifted.

Peanuts



Andy Capp

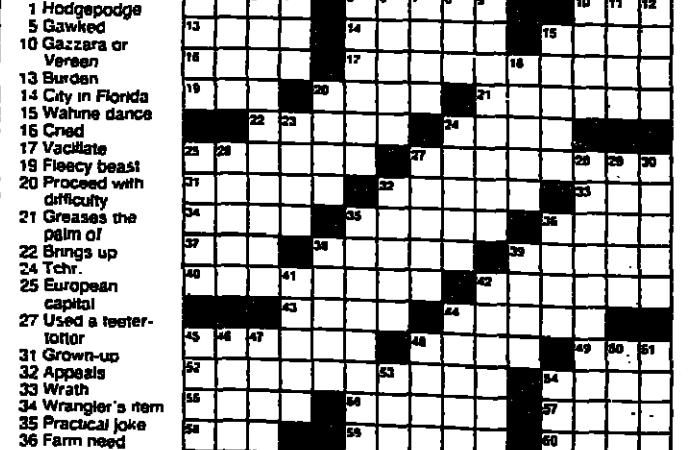


Mutt'n'Jeff



THE Daily Crossword

by Frances Burton



ACROSS
1 Hedgepodge
2 Cowbird
3 Gazza or Verano
10 Surfer
13 City in Florida
14 Wahine dance
15 Chad
17 Vaseline
18 Fleecy beast
20 Proceed with difficulty
21 Grasses the palm of
22 Brings up
24 Tchr.
25 European capital
27 Used a teeter-totter
32 Appeals
33 Wrath
34 Wrangler's term
35 Practical joke
36 Farm need
37 Before
38 Gashes
39 Latin American dance
40 Musical piece
42 Team member
43 Mr or Ms
44 Ser vigorously
45 Bing
48 European river
49 A Gershwin
52 Currency
54 Brisk pace
55 Italian princely family
56 Ecst.
57 Different
58 Auto of old
59 Seabirds
60 Hurricane centers

DOWN
1 Julia Ward —
2 Again
3 Just great
4 FDR follower
5 Jean Luc —
6 Clive and ascot
7 Wan
8 Annex
9 Dawn
10 Tulp beginning
11 She Fr.
12 Negative votes
15 Israeli seaport
16 Mollen metal
20 Scum
23 Stanley
24 Hammer parts
25 Stable beasts
26 Worsp
27 Roofing material
28 Without choice
29 Crudely notched
30 Task (included container)
32 Concoit
35 Aquatic mammal
38 Former TV host
39 Parvency
40 Parvency
41 Follow
42 Aspects
44 Make happen
45 Penny's ex
46 Flower
47 Eight pref.
48 Go away!
50 — and shine
51 Zoo animals
52 Russian
53 Five
54 Fair grade

THE BETTER HALF

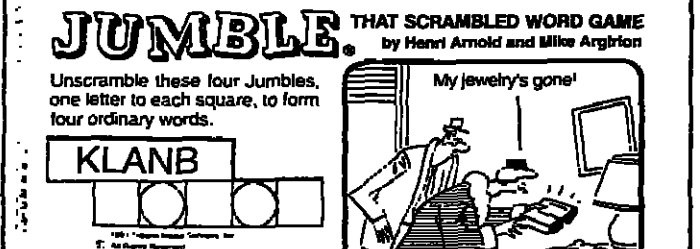
By Glasbergen



JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argibon



Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

Answer: "KLANB" THEM
Saturday's Jumbles: VAPOR ABATE EQUATE DIVIDE
Answer: How he found himself after digging a dry well — DEEPER IN DEBT

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
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diplomat. "And nobody really knows what to do about it either."

Economics Minister Alexander Shokhin said this week that firms owed the government 17 trillion roubles (\$11 billion), but the government owed firms about the same amount.

The energy sector says consumers owe it 10 trillion roubles (\$6.5 billion). Farmers say the state and commercial firms owe them up to 1.4 trillion roubles (\$900 million).

"Factories are just running up IOUs," said an economist. "It has happened before but this time it is more serious because stocks are much lower and the impact is more."

Economists say the cause of the problem is a combination of a government decision last year to defer as many payments as possible and a head-in-the-sand attitude from firms convinced that the government will one day bail them out.

But the results are catastrophic, both for the economy

and for a government robbed of essential tax revenue because nobody can be bothered to pay.

The first clue to the dire economic impact of the rising debts emerged this week when the State Statistics Committee said January industrial output was 25.5 per cent below year-ago levels, compared with a 16 per cent drop in the previous month.

"Factories are simply closing because they cannot afford to pay for fuel or spare parts," the economist said.

Lada cars, which closed for some of December and the whole of January, was one of the best-known victims, but hundreds of other plants have also closed. Local authorities have rationed fuel or reduced heating because they cannot pay their bills.

Mr. Shokhin said non-payment of taxes meant that the government would not be able to lower taxes as it originally hoped to do.

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Mandela calls on S. Africa's whites to prevent civil war

Buthelezi: Vote concession is not enough

SASOLBURG, South Africa (R) — Nelson Mandela appealed to white South Africans Friday to condemn right wing threats of civil war and violence.

"If whites stand up in sufficient numbers, especially Afrikaners, and say 'we condemn this violence, we condemn this threat'... people will listen," the African National Congress (ANC) leader said during a campaign visit to the Orange Free State.

Speaking to black and white workers at Sasolburg, site of an oil-from-coal refinery, Mr. Mandela said it was up to whites to make a determined stand against extremists.

"There are men and women, organisations in this country openly threatening violence," Mr. Mandela said, citing leaders of the white separatist Afrikaner People's Front.

Both blacks and whites would die if the right wing carried out its threats, he said, adding that all South Africans should do whatever necessary to prevent the country from becoming another Bosnia or Somalia.

Mr. Mandela said it was significant that he had been welcomed to Sasol by its managers "in view of the past relationship between ourselves in the form of Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) and its activities against Sasol."

"We're working for the new South Africa together now," he said.

Guerrillas of MK, the ANC armed wing, blew up a refinery run by the Sasol company during the struggle against white

minority rule.

The armed struggle was suspended four years ago when President F.W. de Klerk legalised the ANC, released Mr. Mandela from jail and began dismantling apartheid. The process will culminate in South Africa's first all-race elections at the end of April.

Mr. Mandela said it was essential that peace and stability return to South Africa to prevent the drain of skills, expertise and capital.

"Try and build peace because without peace we're not going to get investment from abroad and local businesses are going to export their capital," he said.

He said the National Party was a lame duck administration which had only bankrupt policies to offer. Few of the nominees on the National Party electoral list were "well-known" blacks.

"The people are shunning the National Party like lepers, which they are... the NP is still a racist party... extinction is staring them in the face."

Meanwhile, with eight days left to register for South Africa's first all-race election, conservative Zulu chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi Friday dismissed a government concession aimed at securing his participation.

Mr. Buthelezi told state television the government's offer at eleventh-hour talks Thursday of a separate regional ballot was not enough on its own to draw him into the election.

He said the climbdown from the earlier insistence on a single vote for both national and

regional authorities showed that more concessions were possible.

The government, the African National Congress led by Nelson Mandela and the right-wing Freedom Alliance, which includes Mr. Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party, failed at Thursday's talks to find a formula for black and white conservatives to take part in the election on April 26-28.

The alliance links black and white conservatives who have vowed to boycott the election unless they are given guarantees of virtual autonomy in nine separate regions.

Alliance leader Rowan Crojane said in an interview Friday that the government put forward a compromise package including an offer of separate national and regional ballots.

A source at the talks said the package included increased taxation powers for regional governments in a post-apartheid South Africa, but not the constitutional autonomy that Mr. Buthelezi and other right-wingers have demanded.

Chief government negotiator Roelf Meyer declined to reveal details of the concessions offered, but said: "They are of such a reasonable nature that there should be no reason to be negative... it's an exploratory proposal to see whether we can move forward on that basis."

Mr. Crojane said ANC negotiator Thabo Mbeki indicated he also had a compromise to offer, but said the ANC in-

sisted on preconditions before making its offer known.

"We will report to our leaders individually on the meeting and there will probably be a summit of Freedom Alliance leaders within the next few days," he said.

Mr. Crojane said the alliance had agreed to meet the government and the ANC again Monday evening and a summit of right-wing leaders might be held earlier Monday.

He said the alliance might consider registering provisionally for the election before the deadline next Saturday to win an additional 20 days for negotiation before the closing date for nominations.

"My understanding is that we can register and then, if we do not submit a list of candidates, that registration will lapse," he said.

On Thursday, Mr. Buthelezi told a meeting of businessmen he would continue to insist on constitutional concessions as the price for his participation in the election.

"Even if the government and the ANC... do relent on this issue of the double ballot, the double ballot by itself is quite meaningless if regions do not have the autonomy which cannot be interfered with by the Constituent Assembly," he said.

The April election, in which about 22 million blacks will vote for the first time, will be for a multi-party assembly that will run the country for five years and draw up a permanent non-racial constitution.



A member of the South African Police's notorious Internal Stability Unit watches as Zulus in Tokoza voice their disapproval at the unit's withdrawal from the troubled townships in the run-up to the upcoming elections (AFP photo)

9 die in Sarajevo shelling attack

SARAJEVO (R) — Nine people died in Sarajevo's Muslim suburb of Dobrinja Friday when shells slammed into a crowd waiting for humanitarian aid, hospital sources said.

Three of the dead were children and at least 15 people were wounded.

Western journalists said survivors were giving first aid to casualties of an earlier shelling when a second shell exploded amongst the crowd.

Attacks on Sarajevo by Serb forces besieging the Bosnian capital has been intense this week and U.N. peacekeepers said tension in the city was high.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose, the new U.N. commander in Bosnia, said Friday his new "get tough" approach would get more humanitarian aid convoys through to Bosnia.

Gen. Rose blamed a "fragmented" approach by the United Nations in the past and said his new policy would diminish the risk faced by the troops under his command.

Gen. Rose has promised a "hardline, hard-nosed" approach to his mission to aid civilian victims of the war and told BBC Radio that "by focusing our efforts... I am quite sure we will increase the number of convoys going through to central Bosnia."

Serb forces unblocked U.N. traffic on a road outside Sarajevo after Gen. Rose threatened to use Warrior combat vehicles to force a way past if necessary, U.N. officials said Thursday.

Commenting on a three-pronged U.N. effort on the peacekeeping, military and humanitarian fronts, he said: "I think possibly some of our effort has been somewhat fragmented and there hasn't been a totally coherent approach."

Gen. Rose, a former commander of Britain's crack SAS (Special Air Service) regiment, said "only half of the convoys required are getting into central Bosnia."

Asked if his approach might endanger the troops under his command, Gen. Rose said: "The risks will be diminished by the fact that we are adopting a slightly tougher stance."

At the United Nations, the Security Council threatened sanctions against Croatia Thursday for sending troops to Bosnia but it is questionable whether the 15-member body will impose them.

Nevertheless, Council members as well as Croatia's U.N. ambassador, Mario Nobilo, said they considered the warning a serious one but hoped it would not be carried out.

Mr. Nobilo returned the threat by saying his country would "spark a new war" mainly against rebel Serbs in Croatia, if the sanctions were imposed.

"We would be ruining out of time and in the first place would liberate (Croatian territories) by our own forces, whatever the price would be," he told reporters.

With three Council members — France, Britain and Spain — members of the European

Union, few expect any Council action before the EU has taken a position. The Europeans intend to discuss the issue Monday, with Germany having already signalled its opposition to an economic embargo.

But European diplomats said they expected Germany to use its influence with Croatia and get the troops withdrawn.

The threat of sanctions against Croatia, similar to those imposed against the Yugoslav Republics of Serbia and Montenegro, was prompted by reports that Croatia sent regular army troops to Bosnia to reinforce Croat militias battling Bosnian government forces.

Secretary-General Boutros Ghali earlier this week identified 3,000 to 5,000 regular Croatian army troops in central and southern Bosnia, including three brigades and a military police force. He said the army's equipment included heavy artillery and multi-barrelled rocket launchers.

In a statement read at a formal meeting Thursday, the Security Council said it would consider "other serious measures" if Croatia "fails to put an immediate end to all forms of interference" in Bosnia.

Council members said "serious measures" were a codeword for sanctions.

Dr. Ghali is to report within two weeks on Croatia's progress towards withdrawal "all elements" of the Croatian army and their equipment.

The Council will then consider the controversy again.

Major hailed for getting tough

LONDON (R) — Conservatives Friday hailed Prime Minister John Major's new tough approach with party rebels but conceded the government faces an uphill struggle to overcome its image of division and scandal.

The mild-mannered Major sent a stern message to the battered party Thursday, telling them to stop sniping or face defeat at the next election. About 200 parliamentarians stamped their feet in approval at his words.

But not all the rebels in a party riven by factions agreed to toe the line. Right-winger Edward Leigh said this "reading of the riot act" would not stop him criticising the government.

An opinion poll in the Daily Telegraph highlighted the party's unpopularity after almost 15 years in power. It showed nearly two thirds of voters felt "the Conservatives these days give the impression of being very sleazy and disreputable."

Mr. Major tried to restore his authority at last October's party conference but in the new year the government was hit by financial and sexual scandals that ended three embarrassing resignations.

His leadership could come under renewed fire if, as expected, the Conservatives fare badly in local elections in May and European parliamentary elections in June.

Angered by bickering and back-biting over his vacillating leadership, Mr. Major dismissed right-wing calls for a cabinet reshuffle Tuesday and 48 hours later told rank-and-file Conservative members of parliament: The sniping has to stop.

Warning that errant or disloyal ministers would be sacked, he called for an end to anonymous criticism from a party split by right and left factions and divisions over Europe.

"I will stop reading the papers if you will stop talking to them," Mr. Major told the MPs.

Sir Marcus Fox, head of the group that Mr. Major addressed, told BBC Television: "It was a very blunt message. But it had to be said because of our standing in the polls and because we should get some credit for getting out of recession."

Party Chairman Sir Norman Fowler said: "What concerns the prime minister and what concerns me still, is that unless we are careful we are letting down the party in the country, the people on the doorsteps and the councillors."

U.S. Senate confirms Perry for defence post

WASHINGTON (AP) — Acting with unusual speed, the Senate confirmed William Perry as defence secretary, turning over command of the Pentagon to a scholar, businessman and expert on high-tech weapons.

The 97-0 vote came slightly more than a week after President Bill Clinton named Mr. Perry, until now the No. 2 man at the Pentagon, to replace Les Aspin. Shortly after the Senate vote, Dr. Perry was sworn in at the Pentagon.

"He does have the vision we need," said Democratic Sen. Carl Levin, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. "He is totally committed to the security of this country."

Committee colleague John Warner, a Virginia Republican, predicted Dr. Perry would rank "among the finest" of the 19 people to hold the job since its creation after World War II.

Dr. Perry takes over as the glow of cold war victory fades and the specter of nuclear weapons proliferation and simmering regional conflict emerges. And he will move into the spacious office overlooking the Potomac as the Pentagon is adjusting to new rules on women in combat and homosexuals in uniform.

Republican members of the armed services panel almost placed a hold on Dr. Perry's nomination because of their concerns about the administration policy on homosexuals in the military. After a hasty series of telephone calls between Dr. Perry and committee members, the Republicans decided against it.

"We came to the unanimous decision that it's too important a position to be held up," said Republican Sen. Dan Coats. Although he voted for the nominee, Sen. Coats said on the Senate floor he wondered if the reserved, bookish Perry would "defer to louder or stronger voices" in the administration and on Capitol Hill.

But other senators lined up to speak in glowing terms of Dr. Perry, for his service in the Carter administration's Pentagon.

Dr. Perry leaves Friday for a conference in Munich on defence issues. And next week he returns to Capitol Hill to present the administration's \$264 billion defence spending plan.

The 66-year-old Stanford University engineering professor helped forge defence policy for the past year under Mr. Aspin and directed defence research under President Carter. He made his reputation in defence circles as the leading promoter of radar-evading STEALTH technology. He also became a millionaire as the founder of and consultant to defence contractors.

Opinion polls show the race for the powerful presidency becoming increasingly close, with Defence Minister Elisabeth Rehn and Martti Ahtisaari of the opposition Social Democrats running neck and neck.

"It is impossible to anticipate what will happen," said political science Professor Olavi Borg at Tampere University.

Tuomo Martikainen, professor at Helsinki University, said the election could be so close that "luck plays a crucial role" and that the outcome may well be decided by voter turnout.

"The matter is in the hands of marginal voters," he said. The two led nine other candidates in the election's

gon as the "godfather of STEALTH" technology and as a management innovator.

"Some people have said he is not charismatic, that we need a charismatic secretary of defence. I disagree," Sen. Levin said. "We need someone who has the experience to change the culture there."

In particular, lawmakers are hoping Dr. Perry can make good on his promise to institute management and procurement reforms that could save billions of dollars for use on weapons or military readiness.

"We must manage our budget a lot better," Sen. Levin said. "We can do that with Dr. Perry."

Armed Services Chairman Sam Nunn, a Georgia Democrat, said of Dr. Perry's testimony in his confirmation hearing Wednesday, "it was impressive and it was straightforward."

Sen. Nunn and other committee members urged an accelerated process because they have already considered and approved Dr. Perry for other posts and to avoid what is seen as a leadership vacuum in the nearly two months since Mr. Aspin announced his departure.

The Senate has confirmed Dr. Perry three times before for lesser positions in the Pentagon, twice during the Carter administration and last year for the deputy defence secretary post.

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Berlusconi out front in Italy, poll says

ROME (R) — Media magnate Silvio Berlusconi emerged Friday as Italy's most trusted politician in an opinion poll that also revealed deep confusion among voters over which party to back in the country's landmark elections.

The survey by the Doxa Institute provided a timely boost for the multi-millionaire, who is threatening to go it alone in the March 27-28 elections unless potential allies in the centre and on the right squabble and join forces against the left.

At the same time, however, two thirds of the sample said they did not know which party to vote for in the general elections, to be held under a new simple majority system that is expected to redraw Italy's political map.

"The number of 'don't knows' has never been so high as this time round," said Doxa Director Ennio Salamone. He cautioned that the uncertainty would affect the reliability of polls.

Though limited to 506 Italians, Doxa's telephone survey for TG3 state television news showed 25 per cent of respondents saw Mr. Berlusconi as the person most able to tackle Italy's problems.

That put the tycoon, who entered politics last week at the head of a "Forza Italia" (Go Italy) conservative movement, far ahead of the field.

Current Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, Italy's first non-political head of government, was next with 10 per cent.

HELSINKI (R) — Finns worried about economy and foreign policy issues will choose between a woman defence minister and a veteran U.N. diplomat in a presidential election Sunday set to become a political thriller.

Opinion polls show the race for the powerful presidency becoming increasingly close, with Defence Minister Elisabeth Rehn and Martti Ahtisaari of the opposition Social Democrats running neck and neck.

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N. Korea seems to close door on inspections

VIENNA (R) — North Korea said Friday there was "no immediate prospect" of letting the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) conduct unconditional inspections of its nuclear sites.

The North Korean envoy to the IAEA, Yun Ho-Jin, told Reuters in Vienna that the conflicting positions of the IAEA and Pyongyang "cannot be merged at the moment."

Without inspections, the U.N. agency will be unable to give North Korea a clean bill of nuclear health by the end of this month, and the United States, which believes Pyongyang is making atomic bombs, could demand punitive sanctions.

The hardline and heavily-armed Communist state, issuing a stream of hostile statements this week, has warned it would regard this an act of war.

North Korea disclaims nuclear weapons ambitions.

The United States has offered to end North Korea's economic and political isolation in return for IAEA access

to seven declared nuclear sites.

On Jan. 20, the IAEA said North Korea was seeking to place unacceptable limits on the proposed examination of the facilities, and warned there would be no inspections at all unless these conditions were dropped.

With less than three weeks to go before the IAEA must issue a report to its board of governors, meeting in the week of Feb. 21, the agency's talks with North Korea appeared at a dead end.

"We will not accept to clarify everything," Mr. Yun said. "We have offered enough to prove the continuity of knowledge (about North Korea's nuclear activities)."

Some U.S. senators are displaying impatience with the Clinton administration's attempts to cajole the North, complaining these rely on "too much carrot and not enough stick."

When Washington said a week ago that it was sending Patriot anti-missile defence systems to its ally South Korea, Pyongyang unleashed a tirade

of angry statements.

IAEA spokesman David Kyd said North Korea's nuclear sites had not been opened to outside inspection for over a year, apart from two brief visits last summer to change film and batteries in IAEA cameras.

But Mr. Yun indicated that the inspection measures the agency was demanding to carry out were regarded by his government as excessive.

Last Friday, Mr. Kyd said the IAEA hoped to hear from the North Koreans early in the week. But the agency is still waiting for a formal answer.

"We've had no notification," Mr. Kyd said Thursday. "It looks pretty dismal."

Pyeongyang has warned it will tear up all its "goodwill commitments" over nuclear inspections and finally renounce the non-proliferation treaty (NPT), which the IAEA is pledged to safeguard through regular inspections.

It has accused the U.S. of "despicable and dangerous actions of perfidy."

Festival to showcase East Europe

BERLIN (AP) — The 12-day Berlin Film Festival will pay tribute to screen legend Sophia Loren and the late Erich von Stroheim, the Vienna-born actor and director of the Hollywood classics Greed and The Wedding March. Two-thirds of the 22 film vying for the festival's highest honour, the Golden Bear Prize, are European.

Competitors include Jim Sheridan's "In the Name of The Father," a British-Irish production starring Daniel Day-Lewis about a father and son's wrongful imprisonment for an IRA bombing. French director Alan Resnais is in the running with two films Smoking and No Smoking — which chart twisting paths in human relations and are based on an Alan Ayckbourn play. Only two U.S. films are in the main competition: Jonathan Demme's Philadelphia, about a man who fights back after being fired because he has AIDS, and Peter Weir's Fearless, about aircraft disaster survivors. A joint Russian-French production, Semjon Aranovitch's The Year Of The Dog heads three Eastern European challengers. Shot in Moldova, it treats homelessness with a Dostoevsky-like eye, said Festival Director Moritz de Hadeln. Hundreds of feature, documentary and experimental films are being shown out of competition, including children's films from Mongolia and South Africa. A restored copy of The Great Gatsby, Von Stroheim's first sound film, will be among 12 films making their world premieres. The festival opens on Feb. 10, and Ms. Loren is due to receive an Honorary Life Achievement Golden Bear on Feb. 17. Jack Valenti, president of the U.S. Motion Picture Association, is likely to stir controversy during his planned appearance. He has led the fight to lower European restrictions to Hollywood movies. European culture ministers are to gather at the festival on Feb. 19 to discuss the industry's trans-Atlantic feud. Other Golden Bear candidates include: The Blue One by Germany's Lienenhard Wawryn, Back to Square One by Germany's Reinhard Münster, Sparkling Fox by Chinese-Hong Kong production by Wu Zhi-Niu, Hwaomkyung by Chang Sun-Woo of South Korea and Shelter Of The Wings by Buddhadeb Dasgupta of India. The Third Bank Of The River by Nelson Pereira Dos Santos of Brazil and the Cuban-Mexican production Fresa Y Chocolate by Tomas Gutierrez Alea and J.C. Tabio.

S. Korea reaffirms ban on Japanese shows, films

SEOUL (AFP) — The South Korea government Wednesday ruled it would maintain a decades-old ban on Japanese shows and films, putting an end to an acrimonious debate coloured by bitter memories of occupation. Foreign Ministry officials said. The decision came at a meeting of South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sung-Joo and governing party leaders. Mr. Han's office said the meeting reaffirmed that an influx of Japanese culture, which has been barred here as unsavoury and alien since the 1910-1945 colonial occupation, it said. "Considering the special national sentiment toward Japan, it is not desirable either," Yonhap, South Korea's national news agency, quoted Paek Nam-Chi, the party's policy coordinator, as saying. The meeting followed a sharp debate triggered by South Korean ambassador to Japan Gong Ro-Myung, who proposed Monday that the ban be lifted "in the current age of advanced telecommunications and mass media, which is rendering borders insignificant. It is desirable for Korea to open its markets now for good Japanese cultural products including movies," he said. Mr. Gong's remarks were seized upon by the local media as South Korean President Kim Young-Sam geared for a trip to Japan in March, with opinions split both among government officials and cultural and artistic circles. Foreign Ministry officials, echoing Mr. Gong's proposal, said the time was ripe for a "soft landing" of Japanese popular culture to help facilitate economic exchanges between the two geographically close countries. "We need an open-minded approach," said a director at the ministry's East Asia Department, speaking on condition of anonymity hours before the decision was made.

case
rope

(AP) — The 1994 Festival will be the last for the late Erich von Stroheim, the Vienna-born director of the films "Greedy" and "The Two Women". Von Stroheim, who died last week, was a pioneer in the use of the camera in film. His films are known for their technical innovation and their depiction of the human condition. Von Stroheim's work has been rediscovered and is now being shown in many film festivals around the world. His films are considered some of the greatest works of the silent era.

reaffirms
anime
films

(P) — The South Korean government has reaffirmed its commitment to the anime film industry. The government has announced that it will provide financial support for the development of anime films. This move is seen as a significant step towards the growth of the anime industry in South Korea. Anime films have become increasingly popular in recent years, and the government's support is expected to lead to more high-quality productions. The anime industry in South Korea has been growing rapidly, and this support is a clear sign of the government's commitment to the sector.

Volkov gets to semis, Lendl ousted in Dubai

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Alexander Volkov of Russia was given a tremendous fright by Sweden's Henrik Holm before the eighth-seeded Russian entered the semifinals of the \$1 million Dubai Open tennis championship.

In a second quarterfinal, fifth seed Ivan Lendl went into the fray against no. 4 seed Magnus Gustafsson with a painful back injury. He retired in the third set leaving Gustafsson, the world no. 12, to enter the semifinals with a score of 4-6, 6-2, 3-1.

The centre-court thriller saw Volkov, the world no. 20, claim six of the last seven games to win 6-4, 0-6, 7-5 after seeming to be on the way out of the tournament, which has a winner's prize fund of \$144,000.

Holm, ranked 27 places below Volkov and the man who upset second seed Thomas Muster in the second round had given little away throughout the two-hour 19-minute contest, but made crucial double faults at 5-5 in the final set.

Just one break of serve separated the pair in the opening set, with Volkov saving two break points before and another one after breaking Holm to lead 4-3. In the second set, the Russian became upset with some line calls and grew increasingly agitated, eventually receiving a warning for abusive language.

Reneberg beats Ruah

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — According to the seedings, he's the next best thing to Michael Chang at the San Jose Open. Ask Rickie Reneberg if that makes him a target and he just about laughs.

"I can't imagine there's a guy out there who feels he can't beat me," Reneberg said after disposing of Venezuela's Maurice Ruah 6-2, 6-1 Thursday to reach the quarterfinals.

While three seeded players have already lost early-round matches, including no. 3 seed Brad Gilbert, a San Francisco Bay area resident, Reneberg has lived up to his billing so far.

Reneberg of Houston is ranked 30th in the world by the ATP and seeded second in San Jose. He has lost only seven games in two matches, making quick work of unseeded challengers, maybe because he's not taking them for granted.

"I don't think there's anyone intimidated by me so it doesn't matter," Reneberg said. "I don't think being seeded really helps me at all."

Next on Reneberg's agenda is hometown favourite Brian MacPhie, a wild-card entry, who advanced with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over no. 8 Luiz Mattar of Brazil.

No. 5 Karsten Braasch of Germany advanced to the quarterfinals with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Alex O'Brien.

Egyptian Special Olympic team preparing for '95 world games

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Special Olympic International (SOI) is gearing up for its 1995 world games in New Haven, Connecticut, and the organization plans to help train Egyptian coaches and trainers — and those of other countries — as they prepare for this quadrennial event.

These plans were discussed during a WorldNet satellite television dialogue between SOI Director Willi Hoehndorf and SOI Director of Sports Training and Competition Tom Songster, in the United States, and a gathering of Egyptian representatives in Cairo, including Ahmad Hamad, national director of SOI in Egypt, and officials representing the ministries of special affairs education, the Supreme Court, and Egypt's Federation of Handicapped People.

"Our headquarters here is now ready to provide massive technical assistance to virtually any country that requires it," Hoehndorf said. "The SOI is prepared to send coaches in the sports in which Egypt plans to participate, experts in organizational management and experts in the area of family involvement in Special Olympics in order to help develop Egypt's programme, he added.

Special Olympics offers sports training and competition worldwide in 23 kinds of sports to children and adults with mental retardation.

Since the programme was founded in 1968 by Mrs. Eunice Shriver, sister of former President John F. Kennedy, more than one million mentally handicapped athletes from 131 countries have participated in the Special Olympics. More than 6,000 athletes from over 100 countries participated in the last world games, held in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1991.

Songster indicated that SOI is anticipating sending experts on all of the sports in which Egypt plans to compete at the 1995 games: Aquatics, athletics, basketball, table tennis, and football.

The coaching strategy of SOI, Songster said, is designed to coax the best performance out of each athlete. The training schools for coaches are constantly getting new ideas from "all over the world," which they incorporate into their programmes at the local, national and international level.

Hoehndorf explained that when the games were formally established, Mrs. Shriver intended them to promote a better life for the retarded. He said she had found, through testing during the late 1950s and early 1960s, positive proof that "with appropriate training and coaching, persons with mental retardation could, in fact, achieve a significant amount of success" in their lives as well as in sports.

She had discovered that it was through such competition that the players could be challenged to "reach their highest potential," developing intellectual, physical, emotional, and social skills, and thereby "transforming dependency into independence, disability to success," he added.

Asked how mental retardation is defined in determining who can participate in the games, Songster and Hoehndorf agreed that rather than use an "intelligence quotient" (IQ) limit, the SOI prefers to ask whether a person has difficulty keeping up educationally with peers.

"Mrs. Shriver's basic philosophy has always been that it's better to include one person that's questionable about eligibility rather than to exclude anyone at all," Hoehndorf said.

Hoehndorf noted that the organisation specifically excludes any sport which may be considered violent, such as boxing, wrestling, or the martial arts. Otherwise, SOI attempts to include representative sporting events from around the world.

Turning to the question of how each country can manage its organisation of the games, Hoehndorf and Songster stressed that SOI has found it quite possible to work well — and jointly — with both government-run, as well as private sports organisations.

Ellis paces Spurs over Cavaliers

CLEVELAND (R) — Dale Ellis scored 31 points, including a three-point play with 4.2 seconds remaining, to lift the streaking San Antonio Spurs to a 98-97 triumph over the Cleveland Cavaliers late Thursday.

Ellis, who netted 13 points in the decisive fourth quarter, scored San Antonio's final seven points. David Robinson added 19 points and Dennis Rodman grabbed 20 rebounds for San Antonio, which won its fifth straight game.

Mark Price, whose jumper with two minutes left gave the Cavs a 94-91 advantage, scored a season-high 29 points.

Larry Nance chipped in with 19 for Cleveland, which played most of the game without Brad Daugherty, who is suffering from the flu.

In Portland, Harvey Grant scored 11 of his season-high 29 points in the third quarter as the Portland Trail Blazers raced past the Phoenix Suns, 126-105.

Grant led seven players in double figures as the Trail Blazers snapped a two-game skid and beat the Suns for the first time in three games this season.

Grant helped extend a nine-point halftime lead to 98-78 entering the fourth quarter. Portland led by as many as 26 points in the final period.

At Utah, B.J. Armstrong scored 20 points and keyed a fourth quarter spurt that helped the Chicago Bulls pull away for their 10th win in 11 games, 94-85, over the Utah Jazz.

Armstrong hit a three-



Robert Parish of the Boston Celtics (right) drives against Shawn Kemp of the Seattle SuperSonics Wednesday. Seattle beat Boston 97-84 (APF).

Prosecutors considering more charges in Kerrigan attack

PORTLAND (AP) — Investigators refused Thursday to rule out filing charges of hindering prosecution against Tonya Harding in the attack on Olympic figure skater Nancy Kerrigan.

Harding, who has not been charged, admitted to authorities that she lied in the first part of her 10½-hour interview at FBI headquarters Jan. 8.

Under Oregon law, a person hinders prosecution by deceiving authorities to prevent the apprehension of someone who has committed a felony.

Norm Frink, Multnomah County deputy district attorney, said a New York daily news report that Harding will be charged with hindering prosecution next week was not correct.

"I am not excluding the possibility that the grand jury might choose to return hindering prosecution charges against someone in this case," Frink said. "But at this point, it's mere speculation and no final decision has been made."

Four people, including Harding's ex-husband, Jeff Gillooly, have confessed to plotting the Jan. 6 attack on Kerrigan to knock her out of the U.S. figure skating championships, the qualifying event for this month's Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, thus enhancing Harding's chance of winning.

Earlier this week, Gillooly pleaded guilty to taking part in the attack and implicated his ex-wife.

Kerrigan, whose right knee was clubbed, withdrew from the championships but was named to the U.S. Olympic team anyway along with Harding, who won the competition.

The U.S. Figure Skating Association was proceeding with steps that could lead to revoking's membership for unethical conduct.

But that process could drag on far past the games, and the U.S. Olympic Committee was not commenting on what action it might take in the meantime.

Harding practised again at a suburban shopping mall rink Thursday and said was ignoring suggestions that she remove herself from the Olympic team.

During the first part of her interview with the FBI, Harding told investigators she knew nothing about any involvement of her ex-husband in the plot. She changed her story and implicated him only after one of her interrogators warned her it was illegal to lie to law enforcement authorities.

Graf, Navratilova waltz into Tokyo semifinals

TOKYO (R) — Top seeds Steffi Graf and Martina Navratilova coasted through straight set wins Friday to advance into the semifinals of the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo.

Fresh from her Australian Open triumph, Graf overwhelmed Canadian qualifier Jana Nedjedy 6-1 6-1 and will next play unseeded Kristie Boogert of the Netherlands, who downed American veteran Pam Shriver 6-1 6-4.

Navratilova kept alive her bid to defend her title and win the first tournament of her final season by outmanoeuvring Larisa Neiland of Latvia 6-4 6-4.

Waiting for her in Saturday's semifinal is sixth seed Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere of Switzerland, who battled to a 6-4 6-4 win against plucky Marketa Kochta of Germany, the victor of third seed Gabriela Sabatini in the second round.

Graf was merciless in her 42-minute drubbing of the Czech-born Canadian, ranked 306 places lower.

"For me it was very easy because I served well and was able to attack her serve," Graf said.

Navratilova, seeded second and playing her first tournament since tumbling out in the second round of the new Virginia Slims in mid-November, unleashed an array of nimble shots in tandem with her powerful serve spiked with topspin.

"I served very well. I lost one point on my serve in the second set and was able to return her serve better than her mine," said 7-year old Navratilova.

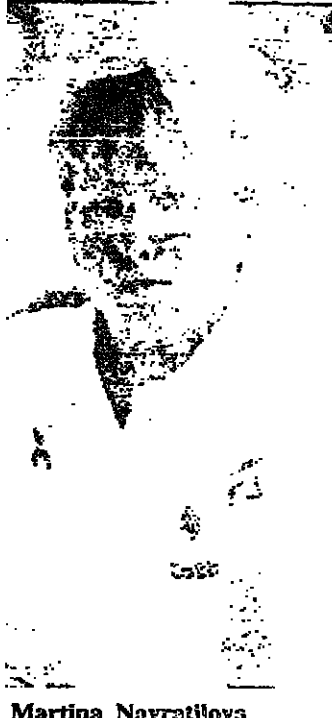
Navratilova, vice winner of the 1993 Wimbledon title, was never in danger of losing her own serve as she executed her powerful serve and volley game to perfection.

The second seed sounded a defiant warning to the Bulgarian-born Maleeva-Fragniere, gunning for her third title here before retiring from tennis at the end of next week's Asia Open in Osaka.

"I'm sure she'd like to go out on a winning note, but if she beats me she'll have to earn it. I'll do everything in my power to make this her last match. period. But at the end of the match, I'll give her a big hug," she said, breaking out into a broad smile.

Maleeva-Fragniere had to overcome a spirited challenge from the tenacious hard-hitting Koehita in a thrilling, closely-contested quarterfinal.

"I don't think I can play much better than this — I'm playing some of my best tennis right now," said Maleeva-Fragniere.



Martina Navratilova

World Cup ski returns to Garmisch after tragedy

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany (R) — World Cup ski racers Sunday return to the venue where former world champion Ulrike Maier lost her life.

The men, however, contest only a slalom following a decision to call off their downhill for safety reasons in the wake of last Saturday's tragedy in the women's downhill on the Kandahar track.

The slalom is raced on a separate course called the Gudiberg on a different slope.

Race organisers decided Wednesday there was not enough snow on important sections of the Kandahar to stage men's downhill training that day because temperatures had risen.

Having already decided not to hold practice Thursday — the day of Maier's funeral — out of respect for the late Austrian, the organisers were left with just one possible practice day before Saturday's scheduled downhill — insufficient, they said, to ensure the race could go ahead smoothly.

Maier was buried in her native village of Rauris, 90 kilometres from Salzburg, after a funeral service attended by her family, friends, top Austrian ski racers and hundreds of local inhabitants.

Hubert Schweighoffer, Maier's finance and father of her four-year-old daughter Melanie, blames the International Ski Federation (FIS) and its officials for her death, alleging safety standards were insufficient.

FIS and the race organisers deny the charge, saying they did everything possible to ensure safety in a sport in which risks cannot be ruled out.

One local mountain-rescuer here was not alone in privately expressing disquiet over the cancellation of the men's downhill in the wake of the doomed women's race.

"The risks are there. They all knew it. She (Maier) knew it. The course is no more dangerous than others. It will be the same at the Olympics."

For this month's Lillehammer Olympics women racers campaigned successfully to get their downhill moved to the men's course on the grounds that the track originally designated for them was not tough enough.

Maier's death has inevitably overshadowed the build-up to Lillehammer.

This week's World Cup programme reflected this, with the Austrians pulling out of women's downhill in Spain and the men's downhill in Garmisch deleted.

But racing returns to Garmisch with the men's slalom and Italy's Alberto Tomba back to top form after posting his third victory of the season in the discipline in Chamonix, France, last Sunday.

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠KQ ♠74 ♠AK543 ♠A432
Partner opens the bidding with four hearts. What action do you take?

Q.2—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A108 ♠10883 ♠94 ♠Q853
Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What do you respond?

Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K94 ♠VASS ♠CASS ♠J985
What is your opening bid?

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠AQ103 ♠A742 ♠K5 ♠Q8
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with a weak two diamonds. What action do you take?

Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠QJ87 ♠94 ♠QJ983 ♠86
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ 1 ♠ ?
What action do you take?

Q.6—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AJ654 ♠Q2 ♠108 ♠8765
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
1 ♠ Pass Pass ?
Do you balance?

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U.S. lifts sanctions on Vietnam, opens new page in ties

HANOI (AP) — Vietnam and the United States set their relationship, soured by war and a long, bitter aftermath, on a new course on Friday after U.S. President Bill Clinton lifted U.S. economic sanctions in force for 17 years.

Vietnam welcomed the gesture — made less than a week before the Tet lunar new year — and said it expected liaison offices to open soon as a stepping stone towards full diplomatic relations.

Le Mai, Hanoi's point man on relations with Washington, said he expected the offices to open soon and he foresaw no problems in arranging the details.

Mr. Mai, deputy foreign minister, also said he did not believe the issue of financial claims dating back to the end of the Vietnam war in 1975, to be discussed later this month, would be "too complicated."

Both sides agreed that normalising relations "cannot be attached with any political preconditions," he told a news conference giving Vietnam's reaction 10 hours after Mr. Clinton's Washington announcement.

"The bottom line is it's up to the goodwill of both sides," he said, declining to predict when diplomatic relations would be established.

In a formal statement, Vietnam welcomed Mr. Clinton's action as "a positive and significant decision, which contributes to opening a new page in U.S.-Vietnam relations in the interests of the two peoples."

News of Mr. Clinton's statement hit Hanoi before dawn on Friday. There was no jubilation in the misty streets of the capital, but the unanimous verdict of Vietnamese citizens and U.S. businessmen here was "great news."

Vietnam's communist leaders were informed immediately of Mr. Clinton's move. Their reaction, Mr. Mai said, was contained in the formal statement.

American companies — the main beneficiaries of the end of the embargo — immediately started doing business (see page 6).

Only 10 hours after Mr. Clinton spoke, American Express signed an agreement with a Vietnamese bank to pave the way for use of its credit cards in Vietnam for the first time.

The U.S. soft drink firm PepsiCo launched a "cola war" in Ho Chi Minh city, formerly Saigon, with its bitter rival Coca-Cola, which said it was confident of regaining the dominant share of the market it had in the old South Vietnam.

Mideast teens present awards to peacemakers

NEW YORK (AP) — It's been a heady few months for Laith, a 14-year-old Palestinian from Jerusalem.

In September, he was on the White House lawn to witness the signing of the historic peace accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

And on Thursday evening, he was in the United States again this time to present an award to Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres for his role in the peace negotiations.

"I was sweating a lot," he said after his speech to Peres, in which he implored the Israeli leader to speed up the process of making peace.

Laith was one of four youngsters from Israel, Egypt and the Israeli-occupied territories who were brought to New York to present the first Seeds of Peace awards at a formal dinner at the Regency Hotel.

Seeds of Peace is a private group formed last April to promote understanding between young people from the Middle East. In August, it brought 46 Israeli, Palestinian and Egyptian youths together at a summer camp in Maine, then brought them to Washington, where their trip culminated in a surprise: an invitation from President Clinton to attend the historic signing.

The awards Thursday went to Mr. Peres, to PLO official Mahmoud Abbas and Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa. Accepting for Abbas was the PLO's representative at the United Nations, Nasser El Kidwah. Egypt's U.N. ambassador, Nabil Al Araby, accepted for Mr. Musa.

Dressed in a bright blue Seeds of Peace T-shirt and standing next to Mr. Peres, Laith told the audience that the peace accord, the implementation of which has been delayed by disagreements, was one of the wisest steps ever taken in the Middle East. Then, staring straight at the Israeli leader, he said he hoped for a Palestinian state, with Arab East Jerusalem "at least" — as its capital.

The two smiled at each other, and the room erupted in laughter. Israel has long maintained that Jerusalem must remain the capital of the Jewish state.

In his remarks, Mr. Peres told Laith he was "grateful for what you said — whether I agree with every word or not."

Yehoyada, a 14-year-old Israeli from West Jerusalem, presented the award to the PLO official, telling him he hoped that one day soon he and his friends will be able to say "see you in Damascus or Amman."



PERSONAL FRIENDS: Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor and Austria's past and present presidents pose for a pre-dinner group photo at the presidential villa late Thursday. The Monarch had earlier flown in from Croatia where he inspected Jordanian troops serving with the U.N. From left to

right: Katharina Kliestil, daughter-in-law of Austrian President Thomas Kliestil, King Hussein and Queen Noor and former Austrian President Kurt Waldheim with his wife Elizabeth (AFP photo)

U.S. envoy optimistic on Cyprus

NICOSIA (AP) — A senior U.S. official helping negotiate implementation of U.N.-backed measures aimed at reuniting war-divided Cyprus said Friday the potential for the process to "get screwed up" was high.

But Robert Lamb, the U.S. State Department's special coordinator for Cyprus, said rival Greek and Turkish Cypriots on the island were faced with a "unique opportunity" following their leaders' acceptance of the U.N. confidence-building steps.

"The potential for this getting screwed up is high," he said. "But the truth of the matter is that it's an opportunity and a good opportunity." "Nobody sees the confidence-building measures as an end in themselves," he told a news conference attended by journalists from both communities and foreign correspondents.

But the measures are "an opportunity to lay the foundation stones and establish the kind of climate in which we can move forward in a positive way," said Mr. Lamb, a former U.S. ambassador to Cyprus.

On Tuesday, U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali praised as a breakthrough the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders' recent acceptance of the U.N. package and their willingness to begin talks on the confidence-building measures.

Rafsanjani suggests West behind shooting

TEHRAN (Agencies) — President Hashemi Rafsanjani, who authorities say was the target of an assassination attempt this week, suggested Friday that the United States and the West were behind the shooting.

Speaking in a prayer sermon at Tehran University, Mr. Rafsanjani, 60, said that "global arrogance" an Iranian epithet for the United States and the West — has been trying to crush the Islamic revolution since it ousted the pro-Western Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in 1979.

As worshippers chanted "Hashemi, Hashemi, God save you," Mr. Rafsanjani shrugged off the alleged assassination attempt.

"In my opinion, this ... is a very minor event, which can always happen," he said. Mr. Rafsanjani declared that even if he had been killed, the Islamic revolution would not collapse. "Global arrogance, America and others should really know that by the physical or psychological elimination of a person they cannot overcome the revolution," he said.

Iran ritually blames the United States, which is trying to isolate the Islamic republic and force it to abandon its radical policies, for most of its woes. "Death to America, death to Israel," roared the crowd when Mr. Rafsanjani referred to the shooting (see page 2).

Security at the university campus in the heart of Tehran was unusually tight. Worshipers stood in line for hours to enter.

The world's richest man, Brunei's Sultan Hassan Bolkiah, who is on an official visit to Iran, sat in a cordoned section among worshippers segregated by sex.

One man in the crowd, who identified himself only as Kaveh, said he had come from northern Tehran for the prayers. "We believe in the revolution and we'll continue supporting Rafsanjani and Ayatollah Khomeini," he said.

"(The plotters) wanted to make a small but noisy move in front of foreign journalists and guests ... it would have been more successful for them if somebody had died," Mr. Rafsanjani said during his sermon.

A man fired five shots, apparently from a small-calibre pistol, during a ceremony at the shrine of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini while Mr. Rafsanjani was giving a speech on Tuesday.

The ceremony commemorated Ayatollah Khomeini's return to Tehran 15 years ago at the start of Iran's Islamic Revolution.

The man was seized, and Mr. Rafsanjani continued his speech after a short break. Iranian officials were reported as saying later that accomplices, described as "anti-Islamic and anti-revolutionary," had been arrested.

"(They aimed) to disrupt the ceremonies and make them unsafe so that people would not participate and give a sign to the outside world that the revolution has lost its lustre," Mr. Rafsanjani said Friday.



Hashemi Rafsanjani

"Some (people) could always cause a small incident to occur," he added. "But be assured that it is nothing against the revolution which has become independent from individuals."

Tehran Radio quoted a police brigadier as saying on Thursday that security forces had information on who was behind the plot but could not release it for security reasons.

The radio had earlier quoted an unnamed security official as saying foreign powers were involved in the plot and Iranian television on Wednesday night blamed the United States and Israel.

Witnesses said on Tuesday the shots were fired from a small-calibre pistol at least 50 metres from the platform where Mr. Rafsanjani stood.

Mr. Rafsanjani, who was elected to a second four-year term last August, has been among the country's top leaders since the revolution. He has reportedly survived several assassination attempts.

Some Iranians doubt the official version of the shooting, claiming it was stage-managed to boost Mr. Rafsanjani's image at a time when his government is mired in crisis.

Ali Mahdi says Somali agreement is near

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Warlord Ali Mahdi Mohamud said on Friday rival Somali leaders were close to agreement to form a government, and even a weak government would be better than none.

It would be "a body without a head" but "we have to opt for the easiest solution," he told Reuters. "Only the Somalis can decide the fate of Somalia. No one can impose it."

Mr. Ali Mahdi, who considers himself interim president, was speaking after talks in which U.S. special envoy Robert Oakley is acting as go-between among factions including his main rival, General Mohammad Farah Aideded.

Foreign intervention launched in December 1992 to protect famine relief from civil war looting is being scaled back with the departure of American and other major Western peacekeeping contingents bloodied in conflict with Gen. Aideded's followers.

Somalia had had no central authority since the fall of dictator Mohammed Siad Barre three years ago. A resurgence of clan fighting is now widely feared.

Harking back to an unsuccessful peace accord negotiated last March in neighbouring Ethiopia, Mr. Ali Mahdi said the plan would have avoided giving dominant power to any one of the warring rivals.

"I said at Addis Ababa that what we accepted was a body without a head — but no one understood me," he said in an interview in his north Mogadishu office.

"Now after one year the international community, Americans and Aideded understand, and are saying now it (a government) can come."

"This is the main new motivation for an interim government."

"Even if the Somalis agree to form a weak government, then we have to make it stronger and build it up in time. You cannot just avoid the idea because it is a weak government," he said.

"We are very close to reaching the conclusion of self government. We are very close to the final stage."

"Ambassador Oakley told us in a message from his government that Somalis have to find a solution to our problem and that the international community is ready to act as a catalyst."

He said specifics of what kind of government and what kind of role Gen. Aideded might have in it were not raised but "we spoke of our willingness to form an interim government... as regard to his meeting with Aideded he just told me it was very positive."

Mr. Oakley said in Nairobi Wednesday he had met Gen. Aideded and he was convinced that he was now determined to seek peace.

Column

Royal watchers doubt Camilla's out of Charles' life

LONDON (AP) — Some royal watchers doubt recent reports in Britain's tabloids that Prince Charles has put Camilla Parker Bowles out of his life for good.

Anthony Holden, who wrote a biography of the heir to the British throne, thinks reports that their relationship is over are part of a public relations campaign by the prince's purported friends to refurbish his image. James Whitaker, the Daily Mirror's royal correspondent, quotes unnamed friends of Prince Charles as saying the prince was outraged at reports that he has dumped Mrs. Parker Bowles. "These two are still in love," he quoted one purported friend as saying. Three Sunday newspapers reported that the prince cut all ties with the 46-year-old wife of an army brigadier to remove any obstacles to his eventual ascension to the throne. Nigel Dempster, the Mail On Sunday's gossip columnist, said friends of the prince told him Prince Charles is no longer accepting phone calls from Mrs. Parker Bowles, a mother of two. But Mr. Whitaker and Richard Kay, the Daily Mail's royal correspondent, reported Monday that Camilla spoke to the prince in Sydney last week. The Prince of Wales, who is touring Australia, has remained silent on the issue. So has his staff. Rumours of a royal affair, which had simmered for years, hit the headlines in 1992 when newspapers published transcripts of an intercepted phone conversation allegedly between the prince and the brigadier's wife expressing their mutual love. The Church of England's Archbishop of York, George Austin, has suggested that the allegations of infidelity made Prince Charles unfit to be king, when he would also become the church's head. Prince Charles and Camilla dated when they were both single and remained friends after Prince Charles married Princess Diana in 1981. The prince and princess separated in December 1992 and share custody of their sons, William, 11, and Harry, 9. The Daily Express reported Tuesday that senior royal aides rejected claims by a relative of Mrs. Parker Bowles that Prince Charles was considering a reconciliation with Princess Diana. Society writer Unamary Parker, a cousin by marriage of Mrs. Parker Bowles, was quoted as saying Princess Diana had agreed to step out of the limelight and Prince Charles was giving up Camilla as part of "a master plan" for reconciliation.

Prince Charles' attacker on bail in hospital

SYDNEY (R) — The man who attacked Britain's Prince Charles with a blank pistol thought he was on a suicide mission, an Australian judge heard Friday before granting bail and ordering him to undergo psychiatric treatment. University student David Kang, 23, lunged at Prince Charles and fired a starter pistol twice during Australia Day celebrations in Sydney on Jan. 26. No-one was hurt. In a late bail hearing, New South Wales Supreme Court Judge Rex Smart released Mr. Kang on Australian dollar 5,000 (\$3,580) bail provided he remained in a Sydney hospital under the care of his psychiatrist. Judge Smart reversed his decision to refuse bail after Mr. Kang's psychiatrist presented evidence after interviewing Mr. Kang in Sydney's maximum security Long Bay Prison. The court heard earlier Friday that Mr. Kang had expected to be shot in the attack on Mr. Charles and left a note telling his family he expected a "rendezvous with God."

Mr. Kang carried magazine articles about a suicide, which he referred to, to overcome his fear of death, police said. Other articles at Mr. Kang's home included one on a bomb. Mr. Kang said he had not copiously pointed the pistol at Prince Charles. "I was running at the time," he said. "I just pulled the trigger twice. I dropped it on the grass, not the stage as the police said. He said he decided to launch himself at Prince Charles after he saw 'nobody was there'. The attack sparked international criticism of Australian security for Prince Charles' visit.

IAF under fire for non-committal stand on Malhas' charges

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Islamic Action Front (IAF) is being targeted for criticism for remaining "uninvolved" in the food and drug cases which was raised by Minister of Health Abdul Rahim Malhas two weeks ago. And while its representatives have responded to critics in the press and among IAF constituency, the front has yet to outline its position towards the affairs.

Some analysts believe that the IAF has been unable to make up its mind over support of Dr. Malhas if only because a large percentage of its constituency is pharmacists and food traders whose interests have been targeted by Dr. Malhas' criticism.

On the other hand, the IAF does not want to appear to be siding with the government especially since it was Dr. Abdul Salam M'ali's government that was perceived to be targeting the Islamists by the change in the Election Law to a one-person, one-vote system.

Other analysts believe that the IAF cannot be called upon to have a unified party line on this issue because the issue is "non-partisan" and is not political in nature.

These analysts believe that the IAF has within its ranks

the same split in opinion over the minister's statements as the one that has appeared in society at large.

The IAF's position may become clearer when its spokesperson in parliament, Hamzeh Mansour, takes the floor today. But in the meantime, the front has attempted to ward off criticism by other deputies and political forces in the country.

It has, nevertheless, worded its response carefully to avoid committing itself to any particular position.

In fact, on Wednesday, the first day of parliamentary discussion of the Malhas allegations, the IAF deputies who are usually at the fore of those signing up to speak against the government did not take the podium and left it instead to the deputies who lashed out at the minister.

Critics of the powerful Islamic party maintain that the movement failed to give adequate attention to Dr. Malhas' charges of corruption among businessmen and importers and within the bureaucracy of the ministry itself.

Two weeks ago, a weekly Arabic newspaper quoted Dr. Malhas as saying that a good quantity of food and medicine that reaches the market does not meet international standards and specifications.

He pointed the finger at what he described as "whales" in the business sector who, he maintained, have exercised pressure and intimidated food and drug control employees in his ministry.

The minister's statements created panic in the Kingdom, especially since Dr. Malhas directly connected the increased percentage of cancer cases in the country with the quality of imported food and drugs.

The Lower House of Parliament immediately called for a session to discuss the charges of the minister and initiate investigations into the minister's claims. The House gave the government three days to present a report substantiating the minister's statements.

But in what appeared to be an isolated incident, the IAF's deputies in the Lower House were seen as the only organised bloc in the House which accepted the government's request to delay discussion of what has been titled by the local press as "Malhas gate."

Other "opposition" deputies had demanded that the government stick to the deadline of last Sunday but they failed to gain the support of the IAF deputies except Zarga Deputy Bassam Emoush, who seconded the govern-

ment's motion for delay saying that they also needed time to "collect information."

Criticism of the IAF's position grew when the president of the Pharmacists Association, Hussam Mismar, who was elected on an Islamist platform, published a letter dismissing Dr. Malhas' call for upgrading and enforcing legislation which would provide for tighter control over the quality of food and medicine in the Kingdom.

At the same time Mr. Mismar published his letter in local Arabic papers. Al Sabeel, an Islamist weekly believed to be the mouthpiece of the IAF, which also marginalised the importance of Dr. Malhas' statements much to the chagrin of its Islamist readers.

In this week's edition, Al Sabeel's editor in chief, Hilmi Al Asmar, sought to ward off criticism that the Islamists were in support of business interests at the expense of the health of the people.

In a long column he also sought to dispel charges that the Islamists' dismissal of the charges made by Dr. Malhas was because he was a well-known critic of Islamist calls for stricter social laws, especially in regards to segregation of men and women. Before assuming his post as minister of health, Dr.

Malhas wrote a weekly column in Al Ra'i Arabic daily in which he often lashed out at fundamentalist social demands and called for progressive and liberal policies.

"We understand the criticism of our brothers who love us and are loved by us, because we did not give the food and medicine case its due in our earlier edition of Al Sabeel," Mr. Asmar said in his column.

"But it was not because we do not want to point to the cases of corruption in our society and not because we are enemies of any particular individual," he added.

Mr. Asmar asserted since other Arabic language papers had dedicated enough space to the case "Al Sabeel did not feel the need to repeat what was already published."

He was responding to a letter the weekly received from Taffieh and which was signed by 23 IAF supporters.

In that letter, which Al Sabeel published on the inside page, the signatories said: "There was great disappointment among the youth of the Islamic movement when your paper was published without investigating or saying a word of support for this important national issue."

The signatories were especially critical of a column by

Mr. Asmar which the letter said "was weak and denied the existence of corruption but instead took the opposite view."

"If there is animosity towards some newspapers, then this should not stop you as Muslims, as a movement and newspaper, to say what is right," the letter added.

The signatories also pointed that "Islamists were the first to open the files of corruption in the last Parliament, and the Islamists have based all their election campaign on putting an end to financial and administrative corruption."

Al Sabeel also carried two items signed by the "editorial staff" in which it said that they were happy to receive "an unending number of telephone calls" and that they were not above criticism.

"We stress that we are completely on the side of the citizen... and by deduction in support of the minister of health against the whales of corruption," one of the pieces said.

The criticism of the IAF movement's position was also apparent in other papers, including the evening daily Akher Khabar, which accused the movement of siding with the rich against the poor.

"We were hoping that the